

Once in Grace Always in Grace?

A Review of First Principles

By Ivan Panin

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Controversy in religion is a hateful thing. It is hard enough to fight the devil, the world and the flesh, without private differences in our own camps. But there is one thing even worse than controversy; and that is false doctrine tolerated, allowed, and permitted without protest or molestation. There are times when controversy is not only a duty, but a benefit. Give me a mighty thunderstorm rather than the pestilential malaria. The one walks in darkness and poisons in silence, and you are never safe. The other frightens and alarms for a little season. But it is soon over, and it clears the air. It is a plain scriptural duty to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints." - Bishop J. C. Ryle

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

This Treatise is a reprint of a pamphlet of 137 pages, from which some two dozen pages are herein eliminated. It originated in some remarks in the Sunday School Times of April 2nd, 1921, concerning the doctrine of Once in Grace always in Grace. The correspondence with the Editor of the Sunday School Times is not reprinted here, it having done its work at the time; but he is referred to hereafter as Mr. T.

Prayers are requested for the writer, who in his 83rd year sorely needs them for himself both spiritually and physically. The infirmities of age have of late come upon him, but the prayers of the people of God are proving themselves as accomplishing what they are promised to do in God's Book.

Aldershot, Ontario, Canada. 12th December, 1937.

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Contents

Introduction.....	4
Chapter 1.....	5
Importance of the Issue Involved.....	
Chapter 2.....	9
Of Christian Fixities.....	
Chapter 3.....	15
Of Knowing the Scriptures.....	
Chapter 4.....	20
What Is Scripture?.....	
Chapter 5.....	23
On Quoting Scripture.....	
Chapter 6.....	28
More On Quoting Scripture.....	
Chapter 7.....	33
More On Quoting Scripture.....	
Chapter 8.....	37
Making Void the Word of God.....	
Chapter 9.....	47
More Making Void the Word of God.....	
Chapter 10.....	54
Pertinent Scripture Quotation.....	
Chapter 11.....	57
Some Pertinent Texts.....	
Chapter 12.....	61
Who Then Are the Saved?.....	
Chapter 13.....	64
The Presupposition Behind Every Scripture.....	
Chapter 14.....	70
More About Who Are the Saved.....	
Chapter 15.....	76
The Germ of Truth In the False Doctrine.....	
Chapter 16.....	79
True Christian Assurance.....	
Other works by Ivan Panin.....	82

Introduction

This text is an OCR and reformatted copy of the Second edition, 1937 (1982 printing) of “*Once In Grace Always in Grace? – A Review of First Principles*” by Ivan Panin.

Ivan Panin was born in Russia in 1855. He was exiled at the age of 18, emigrated to Germany and at the age of 22 emigrated to the United States. There he studied Greek and Hebrew at Harvard University. He became a Christian in 1890 after noting mathematical patterns in the Greek text of the New Testament which demonstrated to him the divine inspiration of Scripture.

He is best known for his work on gematria or the numerical patterns found in the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible (see Other Works by Ivan Panin p. 82). He devoted 50 years to this work until he died in 1942.

‘Once In Grace Always in Grace?’ or “*Once Saved Always Saved*” (as it is widely known today) is a passionate (and at times satirical) critique of this crucial subject. His commentary on how Scripture should be interpreted and understood is to be highly commended.

Alternative sub-title: *Principles For the Interpretation of Scripture.*

Note: The 'Mr T' referred to in this book is Charles G. Trumbull, Editor of Sunday School Times 1903-1941.

The remarks in the Sunday School Times, which Ivan Panin referred to in the original preface, was entitled *'Are Names Ever Blotted Out of the Book of Life?'*, Sunday School Times 2/4/1921 p186

Peter Miles, May 2026. Email: peter@growinginchrist.guide

Chapter 1

Importance of the Issue Involved

1.

The teaching (and conduct of Christian flowing there from) summed up in the formula '*Once in Grace always in Grace*', the writer understands to be as follows: That from the moment one sincerely and penitently accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour from the guilt and penalty of sin through His death on the cross, he is by this one act of faith forthwith saved everlastingly, beyond recall, without further condition; without any if whatsoever; that such a one who once thus believes on the Lord Jesus Christ becomes forthwith so constituted morally (and this moreover instantaneously), that (1) he never *will* fall away; (2) never *can* fall away; and (3) that the holy and righteous God who can in no wise clear the guilty, has somehow, somewhere pledged Himself that He will see to it that such never *shall* fall away; whatever their behaviour, character, or neglect, or even presumption in their conduct.

Such are thus provided with a passport vised for eternity; its bearer may by his walk be headed for Gehenna - no matter. The good Lord, who from the high and lofty unchangeable One has now changed to a changeable One - He will see him through. He may have to arrive in heaven at last after a long journey, or voyage, or even flight through Hell itself - no matter. The Spotless Lamb of God, slain for his sins from the foundation of the world, with His eyes as flame of fire; the Lord on whom he has once "believed," is pledged to see him through. His route to Heaven may have been through the roads from and to Vanity Fair, where the Eternal Spirit in His strivings and pleadings has at first been unheeded, then resisted, then grieved away - no matter. The Blessed Spirit Himself will at last by sheer compulsion lay hold of His defiled temple, and land him by the sanctifying power of death, if need be, in heaven after all, because years ago such a one had once "believed"...

Their doctrine is either this, or mere verbiage. For, if the being transformed into the image of the Master; if Christlike character and consequent walk (bestowed indeed by grace from above, *but solely in answer to obedience*,

by which alone such grace is obtained) HAVE aught to do with salvation AFTER believing then the formula, *Once in Grace always in Grace*, becomes forthwith both void of meaning, and the basis for mere strivings about words.

2.

But if Christian character and conduct after believing have nought to do with final salvation, then the instructions, exhortations, pleadings and threats of the Bible, which form a large part of the New Testament, as well as of the Old, become that much waste paper. If final salvation is assured by merely one act of faith (faith being after all the mere method of entering into Life, having for its object the fruit-bearing, obedient Life) then the Epistle of James goes at once into the ash-barrel, Galatians to the discard; and the Epistle of Hebrews, the sole purpose of which is to exhort and warn against falling from grace, this theme forming its warp and woof, becomes a sort of German treaty a scrap of paper. And this not only of three entire books of Holy Writ, but of large portions, like the Sermon on the Mount, the Parables of the Talents, Pounds, and the many chapters of diverse books of the remaining sixty and three of God's oracles.

3.

Moreover, if this teaching is true, it charges the great God with stultifying Himself. He has filled His Book with exhortations, pleadings and beseechings (and even lamentations!) for His people to walk in obedience, to be faithful, to hold fast to what they have, to endure unto the end. He everywhere and through all ages threatens His people with displeasure, wrath, stripes, vengeance for disobedience. He pleads, exhorts, encourages His people to return from backslidings, to put away sin, to repent; and all this for - what? For a wholly needless, even vain purpose; since His people will be saved anyhow: backslidings or no backslidings, repentance or no repentance, obedience or disobedience: nothing can alter that. The decree hath gone forth, that do what they may, be what they may, saved they shall be, and decreed it hath been, moreover, from "eternity," ages before they even "believed." In at least half of His sixty and six books of His Bible the great God, the Holy, Righteous Father, the spotless Son, the Good, Eternal Spirit, has been just wasting breath, saying some needless things, trifling in fact with the children of men, using to the extent of thousands the very

same idle words of which Himself hath said that EVERY idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof on the day of judgment.

4.

What is involved then between Mr. T's teaching and the huge interrogation mark the writer has placed against it, is: first, the character of God; and second, the character of Christian. The character of God - Is the great God such as Once in Grace always in Grace makes Him out to be? The character of Christian - Is it fixed once for all when believing on Christ, or is not Christian rather to be transformed by the renewing of his mind from strength unto strength, and from glory unto glory? If settled and fixed irrevocably and unalterably once for all at his babyhood, Christian has henceforth naught to do but to be munching away at his Once in Grace always in Grace morsel with great glee at this needlessness of aught further than his whilom act of faith. And his walk, life, character will accordingly remain unchanged from that of an ungrown babe; with babe's bib ever remaining the only safe-guard of the inconvenience of slobbering his food all over the regions foreign to its own domesticity. And this is precisely the case with every one holding this teaching known to the writer, unless he happen to be one, who in the goodness of God is permitted to be better than this teaching, in spite of this teaching.

5.

But if Christian is to cease to be a babe (and whereas ye are babes, are ye not carnal? asks the Blessed Holy Spirit; and "The carnal *shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*") but go on unto perfection, then there are many things he has to be putting off, and some things to be putting on; much to forsake and not a little to pursue; some things to flee from, and some things to run after; there is yet a life to be laid down and a cross to be taken up; there is yet his all to be left behind, and the one thing needful to obtain; he has yet in short, to live, to strive, to run a race, to overcome, to apprehend that for which he was apprehended; there remains yet the working out with fear and trembling of that salvation by a spiritual life, which by a merciful God was wrought into him at his spiritual birth.

The issue between *Once in Grace always in Grace* and its opposite, is thus the issue about the whole life of Christian from the moment he is begotten

anew by the Word of God unto the last great day of the Lord, when there is no more trial, no more probation; when the status of the people of God is at last fixed, even as that of the holy angels is now fixed, after their whilom trial and probation.

6.

Fortunately, of the two supreme matters thus at stake between this teaching and the Truth: the character of God and the character of Christian, the first need detain us no further. When warty Cromwell was asked by the obsequious painter: "How does your Lordship wish to be painted?" Lordship Cromwell promptly replied, "Paint me as I am, wart and all." That is what made him Cromwell; not the Lordship Cromwell, but the Cromwell who herein is a true child of the great God Himself. It is a mark of the heavenly origin of the Bible that the great God is painted therein exactly as He is, without apology to the wry face the carnal mind is like to make at the picture. The bearing therefore of Mr. T's teaching here on the character of God, needful as it is in justice to truth to be pointed out, can therewith be dismissed. The character of God needs no readjustment at the hands of a worm of a man.

7.

But the character of Christian, moulded as it is for better or for worse by the other members of the body of Christ, specially by those who undertake to be teachers, is shaped unto life if the teaching be the words of God; is shaped unto death, if the teaching be the thoughts of men. It is in the power of Christian *to destroy with his meat him for whom Christ died*; it is in the power of Christian *to save a soul from death*. Christian may stumble his brother unto perdition, Christian may edify his brother unto eternal life. If therefore by declaring the whole counsel of God, and even pressing it upon the brotherhood that is in the world, some be delivered from the snare of Satan, and others turned from the paths whither they have strayed, it become: a duty in these days of confusion, love of ease, and prophesyings of smooth things, to lift up one's voice even from the housetops, if not indeed yet with a, "Turn ye, turn ye, O house of Israel, for why will ye die!" at least with "Come, and let us reason together" concerning the Word of our God!

Chapter 2

Of Christian Fixities

1.

It is not only highly proper but even amply needful that every earnest soul have at some time of its life certain matters, and these moreover not a few, duly settled, established beyond revision, closed beyond recall. The college youth fresh from his lectures on Ethics, Philosophy, Social Science, and Evolution, may indeed reflect and consider, and ponder and in a highly evolutionary manner even cogitate as to whether a lie, just a small lie, a white lie, a conventional lie-let, be not after all proper and wise, and at times even a duty, if reluctantly told with an indeed wry conscience, but stout heart, for say, the greatest good of the greatest number. But the mature man who by this time has learned what HONESTY means, closes the matter once for all with informing the university professor urbanely if possible, bluntly if needful, but emphatically in either case, that the mere harbouring of the thought as to the admissibility of a lie ever or anywhere is only proof that thou, oh professor, art a cheat at heart already, and a corrupter of youth, maugre thy Doctor's degree and professorship of [Im]morals. To the honest soul that question is closed, closed for aye, even without the verdict that hath gone forth from the throne of God that all liars, and every one that doeth a lie shall have his portion in the LAKE OF FIRE.

To the husband of the faithful wife, grown gray together with her through the decades, amidst sorrows and joys, hopes and fears, comforts and tribulations, with a quiverful of offspring round the table as the fruit of their fellowship of a lifetime, with mayhap an olive plant or two asleep under the sod, as a further plighted bond thereof for the great beyond, the question as to the chastity of his life-mate is closed, barred, bolted. To the one who would venture to suggest, however mildly, that opened it now be, his prompt expedition doorward would be the only appropriate answer.

2.

And as the character of the wife of his bosom is not to be re-inspected before a manly spouse, neither the repute of a sainted mother an open matter before a normally dutiful son; likewise for Christian, for whom some things are meant to be more precious than even wife or mother, some matters (and these likewise not a few) must very early become closed matters, though the heavens fall. Once having washed away his sins in baptism unto the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Christian is no longer free to open again with the Unitarian the question about the triune God, unless he is ready to renounce his baptism and take up his sins anew that had been buried in those waters. Once having named upon him the name of his Christ, Christian is no longer free to open again with the various heretics the question as to His pre-existence, incarnation, miraculous birth, His rising from the dead, His return for His own as the Bridegroom, and to the world as the Judge of the quick and the dead, unless at the peril of his eternal weal. Once having turned his back upon a world that lieth in the Evil One, henceforth to be led of the spirit of his Christ on his pilgrimage in search for another land, even the heavenly, Christian is no longer free to reopen the question as to a possible return to the flesh pots of Egypt, with the leek and the garlic and the onions, unless he is ready for his own carcase to fall in the wilderness like his ensamples of old.

These matters with not a few others must remain for Christian closed once for all, if alive unto God he is at all to be. Obedience unto the words of the Lord and His Apostles must remain a fixity, in spite of friend Scofield and his Antinomian Bible. Observance of the ordinance until He come is not to be a matter of discussion with the Quakers and Salvation Army folk maugre the amiableness of the one and the servicefulness of the other. The unity of the Spirit is not to be parleyed over as an interdenominational topic at the dollar a plate luncheon. Eternal life for the righteous, and equally eternal PUNISHMENT for the unrighteous is not to form the theme of a friendly conference with folk, whether they have the Universalist label on or off. The denial of the inerrancy of the Book of God, even unto its jots and tittles is not to be condoned in the higher critic professors because of their saccharineness, and the desire of undisturbed peace, even if such peace be a covenant with death, and a league with Gehenna. These matters with mayhap a few others must for honest Christian, wise Christian, loyal Christian, remain for ever closed, unalterably closed, be the din of their discussion by the "Scholars"

deafening enough to reach unto the depths of Hades; - Christian stands out in all these, and amidst the noise and clamour and battle of words - unmoved.

3.

Christian fixities thus veritably are, and of these moreover not one, nor two, nor three, but at least a goodly dozen, if not mayhap even, a whole score. But the command, What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder, implies also the duty of not confounding things that differ; and to raise Once in Christ always in Christ to the rank of a Christian indisputability is to exalt an anthill to the rank of a Chimboraso. The fixities of the Christian faith like the Alpine peaks, are rooted in the very bowels as it were of Holy Writ, and reach unto the heavens; the doctrine Once in Grace always in Grace has no such fastness. The anthill thrown up over night in some nook among the Andes, or even a hillock formed by a mountain avalanche does not become thereby the mate of their towering peaks charted for ages. To the ant its hillock is indeed of supreme concern; thence it issues to its toil, thither it returns for its rest. Nevertheless Mt. Everest remains Mount Everest, and anthill remains only anthill. Now *Once in Grace always in Grace* as a doctrinal fixity is to the vital truths of the Bible what anthill is to Chimboraso.

4.

For not of yesternight is the Faith once for all delivered unto the saints. It is now some nineteen centuries since the ascending Lord hath committed that deposit to His Apostles and to all that should believe on Him through their word down these nigh two millennia of time. And through all these centuries of the spreading of the Faith among all climes this teaching of *Once in Grace always in Grace* as a vital part in Christian's walk was not even heard of till only about a century ago; when preaching and practice had at last become so divorced, to the scandal of both conscience and testimony, that this formula was left sole expedient as an anodyne prescription for allaying the one, and as a patch-up plaster to cover the other. But the pure church, the one church of the early centuries that for some three hundred years remained as the bride of Christ unwedded to the world, as it had no need of such expedient, knew likewise nothing thereof.

5.

For this Faith once for all delivered unto the saints as a whole, for its diverse portions singly, has for decades suffered and bled, an innumerable host whose names are now enrolled in heaven. Of these, thousands have died for their faith in the one God, Maker of heaven and earth, but not one is found to have died for *Once in Grace always in Grace*. Tens of thousands have laid down their lives for holding unto the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but not one for *Once in Grace always in Grace*. Hundreds of thousands have perished for cleaving to their crucified but risen Christ; but not one is found to have lost even a hair of his head because of his fidelity to *Once in Grace always in Grace*. Of the countless multitudes left unto the beasts, given to the flames, sent into slavery, handed over to debauchery - cheerfully enough they endured this for not forsaking the assembling of themselves together for worship and love; cheerfully enough they bore this for not parting with their sacred writings; joyfully enough suffered they this for faithfulness to their shepherd, or for any other rule of their most holy faith; but not a moment's buffeting were they called upon to bear to the extent of even a nail of their toe or a latchet of the shoe for the sake of *Once in Grace always in Grace*. And this simply because no such formula was known then as an article of the Faith. Predestination is in Holy Writ, and Assurance is in Holy Writ; and so is Endurance unto the End in Holy Writ, as well as the faithfulness of a promise-keeping God. But unto the rank of a perennial fixity of a creed in the combined Formula Once in Grace, it never did attain. In all the writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers of the first three Christian centuries, through some nine quarto volumes of more than half a thousand pages each, of Final Perseverance there is not a trace.

What place under the sun *Once in Grace always in Grace* has obtained for itself it now holds not for its own deserts, but because of its ancestry. Predestination, which first became a matter of attention with Augustine, who deemed it needful to take refuge thereto in his onslaught against the Pelagian heresy. Augustine stoutly and valiantly fought for the purity of the faith. So far so good. He fought, however, with at least one dangerous weapon far from pure; and so far so bad. To the armoury of Holy Writ Augustine added the wisdom of man; the arsenal of Scripture was supplemented by the artillery of metaphysics; to the strength of the oracles of God were added the ramparts of vain philosophy. Augustine thus

became the patriarch of Christian Incompatibles that have for ages sapped the life of the church, have ever been the bane of the people of God. Of all confusions and evil matings that of Christian and Metaphysician is the fatal-est. Christianity is certainly good, and philosophy is declared by many to be also good. But even if the latter be so, then as according to that wag, Charles Lamb, the mixture of brandy and water spoils two good things, so surely the mixture of Christianity and philosophy not only spoils the two, it pestilently corrupts the one by means of the other. Christian philosophy is not even the mere barren mule sprung from the mating of humble, heaven-imparted faith and bare earthly reason. Christian philosophy is the unavoidable bastard of a faith that has ceased to be humble, and of a reason that has grown proud. Christian philosophy, if the dictionary is to remain the final arbiter as to the meaning of words, is an incompatibility. What short length and narrow breadth, what cold heat and a warm chill, what brilliant darkness and pitch-dark illumination, what high depth or puny vastness is to ordinary thought; what bitter sugar and sweet wormwood is to the taste; what the armless boxer and legless runner is to anatomy; what the south-northern breeze and the east-western gale is to the mariner; what the truthful liar and the honest rogue is to morals, that is the Christian philosopher, the metaphysical theologian, to Christian LIFE.

6.

God's sovereignty, unlimited, unhindered, irresistible, His majesty, is in the Book. His working all things according to the good pleasure of His will is a stern fact. Man's freedom to choose, and responsibility to do or not to do, is also in the Book; and his unbending duty is a like stern fact. But as to their reconciling before man's tiny brain-boxlet- the Book is silent, Nature is dumb, and reason is impotent. All that is left for puny maniken to do here is not to indite lengthy treatises on Predestination and Free Will, on Necessity and Liberty, on Final Perseverance or Unfinal Severance, but to crawl back awed into the cave where he belongs, only to find that when man thus retires thereto, the great God has the Light of Heaven in abundance for him there....

7.

Now it is from this Augustinian Predestination as a sire, with the

metaphysical blood of Calvin, Edwards, Chalmers, Princeton and Hodge added on through the generations, that *Once in Grace always in Grace* owes its descent. And this much for its pedigree, to be duly boasted of by him who finds ought whereof to boast here.

Not therefore on the ground of this doctrine being an irrevocable fixity can Mr. T. decline here a loving invitation to re-examine himself as to whether he is in the faith here. Instead of an ancient fixity, we have to do here with a most recent upstart, a mere modern parvenu; instead of a scion of a proud ancestry we have here an adventurer of disreputable descent.

Chapter 3

Of Knowing the Scriptures

1.

Mr. T. gives as the reason for his assurance as to the truth of *Once in Grace always in Grace* the fact that he has for years been a Bible student thereon himself, and has moreover consulted "other sound Bible students." He is thus entitled here to speak with authority, not only his own, but also that of others. As for those who have also studied the Book for years in the matter, and have not found Mr. T's doctrine therein, a polite readiness to agree to disagree here is the utmost that can be granted to such. But as to heeding here a possible warning, as to even suspecting that mayhap there is after all room for serious doubt, for sober revision of one's self - We are not of that sort, not unto us, if you please. As a final reason this would scarcely be accepted, even in the case of a mundane book, a man's book. But in the case of a spiritual book, God's Book, before long study thereof can be depended on as the final witness as to the right understanding thereof, the first great preliminary to Bible study has to be attended to, to the exposition of which before him by the writer, Mr. T. has deemed it appropriate to refuse even to listen. ...

2.

When in Matthew 22: 23-29, the Sadducees, those Tyndalls, Huxleys, Darwins, and Spencers of their day, came to the Lord with the most complicated intellectual gymnastic evolution they could devise, and propounded to him the knottiest metaphysical problem known to them and their modern successors as to the exact status of that woman with her seven terrestrial husbands during her celestial estate after the Resurrection, the Lord refrained from discussing Metaphysics with them altogether, terrestrial or otherwise. Instead He at once laid down before them the preliminary Universal Law of mind (and heart too) unknown hitherto to them, and ignored by their successors. Says the Lord to them: "Ye ERR"

(ye are not mere agnostics, as your nineteenth century followers will call themselves, ye are ignoramuses): "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." Our Lord thus lays it down as the source of all their error, the error of the Sadducee, ancient or modern, who knows neither Spirit, nor Angel, nor a rising from the dead, to be first: *not knowing the Scriptures*. This is the first of the two causes given. There is indeed a second like unto it, but solely because it is itself chiefly due to the ignorance of the Scriptures - not knowing the power of God (or His character as manifested by the display of His power). All error of the wise of this age is thus reduced by the Lord to ignorance of His Word, or ignorance of His power, or ignorance of both.

3.

But the Sadducees, the refined, the cultured, the thinkers of their day, who had left the vulgar superstitions such as angel, spirit, resurrection, behind long ago-did they really not know the Scriptures?

That may indeed be true of the modern Sadducee, but it could not be true of the ancient Sadducee. The question of the Lord, "*Have ye not read what was spoken to you by God*" implies that they knew the Scriptures but too well. They had been familiar with them in their youth, and should they in their maturer wisdom be given to ignoring them? They had to recite them daily in their homes themselves, and had to listen to them daily as they were read and sung in temple or synagogue. In their acquaintance with the Scriptures they were fully the equals of many a "dean" of a modern Orthodox Bible Institute, and the superior of many a theological professor of the well-nigh universal unorthodox seminaries.

4.

Nevertheless the one that knoweth the hearts tells them that they do not know the Scriptures. It is one thing to be familiar with the Book of God, even to the extent of knowing its pages by heart, and quite another to know it. Something else beside being a "student" thereof, even for years, is needful here, in order to know it as our Lord means it to be known in His definition of the Source of Error. Voltaire was acquainted enough with Holy Writ to gesticulate thereon lustily enough for decades, but unto being a trustworthy expounder thereof he did not attain, except for scorners like unto himself. Thomas Paine was familiar enough with the Oracles of God

to indite a treatise about them longitudinal enough, only to depart unto his place in due time with prayers unto the Christ one moment, and with curses the next. His American successor, Robert Ingersoll, was versed enough in the Scriptures to orate about them convincingly enough (to mockers like himself) for two hours at a time at some five hundred dollars a night, only to find his last resting place where for him and his like no rest is. The higher critics so-called, whose very life work has been to destroy the faith of folk in God's Book as the Book of life, have given years of most painstaking study to the Bible: its sources, pedigree, family likeness, relations, its authorship, dates. They have brought thereto a most formidable apparatus of microscopic analysis and telescopic synthesis; profound emendation and happy (though not joyful) conjecture. They have furnished it with elucidations and introductions; with hermeneutical, homiletical, logical and grammatical notes, and at times also alas! with rather illogical remarks. They have at last attained among themselves to their own satisfaction and mutual gratulation that consensus of scholarship that has become a match for even the renowned "other sound Bible Scholars," who are apt to be consulted by Mr. T.

5.

And yet it has come to pass that from all this elaborate familiarity, with the words and letters of the Book the spiritual reader of the Bible has to turn away with a sort of melancholy contempt yet firm and sure; the only doubt being whether it should be entertained in proportions microscopic or telescopic. The De Wettes, Strausses, Schleiermachers, Davidsons, Robertson-Smiths, Drivers, Hastings' Dictionary, Cyclopedia Biblical, and the whole host of them, ever so learned as these are as to the letters, syllables, words, syntax, and even dictionary meaning of the Bible - what do these and their whole race of "Bible Students," really KNOW of the Book of God? No sooner do these become vocal than forthwith they display not their knowledge of the Book of God, but not to say ignorance, at least their misknowledge thereof.

Thus it comes to pass that the mere being a student thereof even for years settles as yet nothing as to a true knowledge of God's Book. There is still the previous question to be answered as to the character brought thereto, as to the temper it is approached with. In the case of man's book the question is only as to what sort of a mind is in touch therewith. In the case of God's

Book the question is also as to what sort of a heart is in touch therewith.

6.

But even a rightness of heart as well as of mind is not yet the passport to, the final equipment for, the decisive knowledge of the Word of God. To the son of darkness, with his face set pit-ward, the Bible must remain a sealed book, be his knowledge thereof never so cyclopedic. But even to the son of light, with his face set heavenward, the Bible is not yet therefore ever an open book. The eunuch in the chariot had acquaintance enough with Isaiah 53: 7-8. He had been poring over it with all his eyes on his journey; had been reading and rereading to himself and aloud these two verses for some time. But to the question of Philip in' Acts 8: 30: "Understandest thou then what thou readest?" the honest soul could only answer: "How can I, except some one shall guide me?" Favoured Peter, named of his Lord a Rock, with the keys of the kingdom of the heavens handed over to him, finds still in all the Epistles of Paul things hard to be understood. The prophets, with beloved. Daniel among them, did not always understand the very words given them to write down. And though the apostles had companied with The Teacher Himself for three whole years, teaching them daily by parable and simple word, expounding the Scriptures and declaring their mysteries all the while, He has yet in the end, after all these three years, expressly To OPEN THEIR MIND *to understand the Scriptures* (Luke 24:45).

7.

Year long "study" of the matter, with or without the aid of other sound Bible students, is not yet therefore the final disposal of *Once in Grace always in Grace*. The preliminary matter still to be settled is not, how familiar one is with the contents herein of the Book, but whether they are known here as the Lord means it to be known, when He says, "Ye do err, not KNOWING the Scriptures." The question is not, how long the Book has been studied, but under whom? Under Professors of seminaries, "Deans" of institutes, or mayhap under one's own stubborn head and deceptive heart, or under the Teacher, the Spirit of God? the law being that spiritual things are only spiritually discerned; and that a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Until, therefore, Mr. T. brings forth here proof that his teaching here is surely from above, and the contrary teaching is as surely from beneath, he has as yet spoken to no

purpose, and his words here are so far only vain. Here the issue is clear: Either Mr. T. comes here armed with the plenitude of the Holy Spirit, in which case he has no right to agree to differ, or he is giving utterance to his own mere guesage, in which case he had better not agree to differ; not thus is the Truth of God to be handled even by well-meaning, kindly folk.

8.

The first great Preliminary, therefore, for the right approach unto God's Book, a veritable holy of holies, is not mere acquaintance therewith, but a knowledge thereof; and a knowledge thereof not as man esteems it to be sufficient, but as God requires it. And such knowledge thereof is not given to all, is not within the reach of all. To the natural man, with his whole apparatus of intellect, brain power, training, digests and analyses, summaries, and analogies, the Bible must ever remain a sealed book, be midnight oil never so abundantly consumed in the study thereof, be perspiration never so freely flowing in poring thereover. Only the spiritual man who approaches the Book as every holy place should be approached: with shoes off one's feet, with head bowed, heart bruised, and spirit contrite, and at the Word itself TREMBLING withal - only to such does the Book of God become a plain book, an open book; only to such can it become known, and to none other.

9.

Now it would indeed be ungracious to ask whether in settling this doctrine to their own satisfaction, Mr. T. and his "other Sound Bible Students" have been approaching God's book **THUS**. All the writer can say here is that a cordial invitation to an opponent (who is presumably here in darkness) to agree to disagree does not betray the needful temper towards God's Truth. Intolerant is God's Truth with error, indulges in no suave parleying therewith, least of all does it stretch forth its hands across the impassable chasm between them for a hearty handshake of mutual respect.

Chapter 4

What Is Scripture?

1.

But Mr. T. has quoted Scripture, and is not this the authority of the Spirit Himself? Yes, by all means the Word is the Final Arbiter; but the Word of God - rightly handled, and not wrested, as has been the manner of some as far back as even the days of Peter himself (2 Peter 3: 16).

And thus we are come to a Second Great Scripture Preliminary to which Mr. T. has deemed it proper to refuse here to attend. In support of *Once in Grace always in Grace* he quotes - Scripture.

2.

But before quoting Scripture the preliminary question must be settled: What is "Scripture"? Not all of Israel is Israel, neither are all children [of Abraham] because they are Abraham's seed (Romans 9: 6-7). And neither is all Scripture that is in Scripture. "Curse God and die" is in Scripture, but it is not Scripture; it declares neither the mind of God, nor the rule for man. "All a man hath will he give for his life," is in Scripture, but it is not Scripture. It is not declared by God, nor is it lived out by men of God. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die," is in Scripture, even more than once, but it is not Scripture. The first quotation is indeed by an instrument of the Tempter, and the second by the Tempter himself; but the third is uttered once by an Apostle, and by the Apostle Paul. These three quotations are only examples of many. The first thing therefore to remember is that to quote from Scripture is not yet to quote Scripture. To invoke Scripture for establishing before men the mind of God something is needful than the production of mere texts.

But even where a Scripture clearly declares the mind of God the mere quotation thereof does not yet end the matter.

Scripturalness, (as the term has come to be used by the whole modern school of Bible "teachers") and the mind of God are not identical. Every heresy gets its strength from the fact that it is decidedly scriptural, that some if not many texts can be brought to its support, else not a single fly could be caught therewith. What is Scriptural is oft not only not identical with what is true, it is oft flatly opposed to Truth.

Proverbs 26: 4 gives a plain command. It is the writer's misfortune to meet many "fools." Accordingly in obedience to this Scripture I hold my peace, and do not answer the fool according to his folly, and rid myself of him in silence as best I may; and go my way quite complacent that trying though the fool be, and provoking as he is to be answered, I was given grace not to answer, and to be - Scriptural. But alas! as he opens the Book again to reinforce himself in this grace at the sight of the second fool, who duly approaches soon enough, his eye alights upon the very next verse, Proverbs 26: 5, where I am unqualifiedly told to answer the fool according to his folly; and I am non-plussed. Now as the Editor of a publication with a special department for answering just such questions, will Mr. T. kindly say which is here SCRIPTURE for me? Verse 4 or verse 5? I cannot obey both. If I answer not, I violate the Scripture of verse 5. If I answer, I violate the Scripture of verse 4. I cannot act on both. If I act on one I am unscriptural on the other. As I must either answer or be silent, whichever I do as Scriptural condemns the other as unscriptural. As both verses cannot thus apparently be Scriptural (in his sense), which then is Scripture here, once we begin to quote Scripture at all?

Now there are at least a goodly score of such cases in the Book. Paul teaches in the Spirit as clearly as words can make it, that salvation is by faith alone apart from works, and I believe it with all my heart. James teaches also in the Spirit (in spite of poor Luther's ill-advised speaking thereof as an "Epistle of Straw") and also as clearly as words can make it, that salvation is *not* by faith alone, but *by works also*. This too by the Grace of God I believe with all my heart; but do tell me, which is here Scripture for - you and your like?

And so Predestination and Responsibility are both Scriptural; and I accept them both, but either without the other is false, though the theologians, meta-physicians and theorizers insist that if one is true the other must be

false. So is Final Perseverance and Apostasy of Believers, both are Scriptural, but each alone is not necessarily true. It may indeed be that both together are true only before God, and that before men they may be even a contradiction; but if so, it is a "contradiction" found in SCRIPTURE, and therefore to be accepted, rather than making one portion of Holy Writ void by setting up another portion against it. But the taking a stand as to such, for each, or against each, or neither, or both, is decided not by quoting "Scripture," but by due attention to that very Preliminary which is heedlessly pushed away as a needless acquaintance...

Chapter 5

On Quoting Scripture

1.

The teaching *Once in Grace always in Grace* is established by its advocates to their own satisfaction by the quotation of texts of Scripture. But if this be the final resort for establishing Scripture truth, then by the same method can be established every great heresy that is subversive of the truth. For it must be conceded that:

(1) If Bible Truths are established by mere quotation of texts, be they few or many, then the Unitarians are for once right as against the Trinitarians, with their strenuous assertion that God is one, (which is true) and their still more strenuous assertion that God is only one, and not Three (which is false). If Scripture truth is a matter of the mere letter of the Book, nothing is clearer and simpler than that the Oneness of the Great God, and solely this Oneness is established by the following fourteen texts, four of which are in the New Testament: Deuteronomy 4: 35; 6:4; 32: 39; 2 Samuel 7: 22; Isaiah 43: 10; 44: 6; 45: 18; Psalms 83: 18; 86: 10; 1 Chron. 17:20; Mark 12: 29; 1 Cor. 8: 4; Ephesians 4: 6; 1 Timothy 2: 5. If the Battle about the Trinity (which the writer by the Grace of God is able to glory in with his whole being) is to be fought out with the mere discharge of texts into the opposing camp, then the Trinitarians may forthwith break up camp and depart as best they may; for the Socinians are here hurling Big Bertha shells against what to other than experts in spiritual warfare must be deemed only bird shot.

(2) If Bible Truths are established by mere quotation of texts, be they many or few, then the Sabbatarians of every sort, Seventh Day Adventists, and the rest, are for once right as against the Sunday Keepers. Texts for the Sabbath are abundant: day texts for the establishing of the Lord's Day at all, and for substituting it for the Sabbath, there is not one. And Christendom, including the writer, is all astray here.

(3) If Bible Truths are established by mere quotation of texts, be they many or few, then the feet-washers are the only observers of an ordinance established on the same night with the Lord's Supper. "I have given you an example, that ye should do, as I have done to you. If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also OUGHT to wash one another's feet," is as plain and far clearer than "My sheep shall never perish." With this command unrepealed as it has been standing through all these Christian centuries, Christendom, including the writer, is grossly disobedient thereto, and has been from the beginning of the Church of God.

(4) If Bible Truths are established by the mere flinging of a text into the face of one who contends for the Faith, then the Papal Fellowship, the eastern church, and Luther himself, with his followers, together with the Anglican so-called High-Churchers are right as against the rest in vociferously clamouring for Trans-substantiation, or Con-substantiation. Just as he of Once in Grace always in Grace lustily brandishes about his texts as a finality, so Luther not quite so lustily but equally stubbornly pointed Zwingli for hours to the text "This is my body" as his sole answer to this fellow-labourer in the Gospel who was zealous for the unity of the faith and eager to convince Luther of his error.

(5) If Bible Truths are established by mere quotation of texts, be they many or few, then the Mormons are right as against Christendom with their many-wifiness. Some of the Patriarchs, heroes of faith, did have more than one wife, and remained unrebuked therefore. The undoing of Solomon was not so much the having of a thousand wives, as his letting them draw his heart away from his first love. And even in the New Testament the command that the bishop be husband of one wife, gives the non-bishopy Mormon apparently still the right to be the husband of more than one, if mere texts have to do here with the matter.

(6) If Bible Truths are established by mere quotation of texts, then the Sleep-of-the-dead folk have for their faith texts as clear as "There is therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus;" and the rest of Christendom, including the writer, is all astray here.

(7) If Bible Truths are established by mere quotation of texts then the

Universal Salvationist is right against all Christendom. "And I, if I be lifted up will draw ALL unto Myself," is as clear, if not clearer, than "Who hath begun a good work in you will also finish it." "God willeth that ALL should come to a knowledge of the Truth" is as definite, as "No one shall snatch [My sheep] out of My hand."

2.

In short, there is not a single heresy, a single vagary, fanaticism, or even an occasional sin that cannot be commended by some Scripture quotation. The Christian Alliancite bases one quarter of his fourfold gospel, "Healing for the body in the Atonement on "Himself took our sicknesses, and bore our diseases," found thrice in Scripture, though poor Paul knew nothing thereof when he left Trophimus sick. The Lord's commending the cheating steward, and exhorting His disciples to make friends for themselves out of the mammon of unrighteousness is justly quoted to his own satisfaction by many a modern cheat. And the woman, who finally gave up being present at the Lord's Table because her attention was called to the absence of a single text acknowledging the presence of a woman thereat, was only practising the method of establishing the truth of *Once in Grace always in Grace*.

3.

The Bible is God's book, and as such not even a letter thereof can be misplaced without havoc being wrought with God's handiwork as well as His purpose there through. Moreover it is the Sword of the Spirit, and a two-edged sword at that; cutting, if not handled expertly, the cutter as well as the intended cuttee; and as quoting Scripture is only brandishing the Sword of the Spirit, only those versed in the art can be sure against harm here to themselves and those about them. Now, how serious this matter of quoting Scriptures is in the sight of the Great God Himself is probably best seen from the place He assigns to the method of quoting Holy Writ in His own Book. The matter of quoting God's Word is dealt with almost on the first pages thereof. Already in Genesis 3:1, as far back as paradise, the word of Elohim is already quoted, "Ye shall not die." But the quoter of Scripture here is the Adversary of souls through the Serpent; and his purpose the destruction of Adam and his entire race after him.

4.

And when in the New Testament the Second Adam comes into view, the very first text quoted from the Word of God as to the conduct of the children of men is again from the mouth of the same Adversary with the same intent unto the ruin of the race the Second Adam came to save. Thus the very place these quotations hold in the Book with their unholy source and evil intent are a divine parable as it were of the treacherousness of mere quotation of Scripture as a weapon for truth.

Nay, when the Saviour Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ undertook to teach His Disciples the way of Life, when He comes to the A.B.C. thereof, and begins His five Ye have heard's in Matthew 5, He begins indeed with the quotation of a text of Scripture: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill," but He notifies His disciples forthwith that He quotes this Scripture not as the last word to be said here, but expressly to be qualified, amended, changed, enlarged, with His "But I say unto you!"

5.

Thus though the lament over the wresting of Scripture is as late as Second Peter; and the exhortation not to go beyond what is writ, is as far down in the Book as Second Corinthians, and the command to handle the Word of Life aright is in almost the last book of the Bible, the parable concerning the whole is already delivered in the first pages first of the Old Testament and then of the New. This is God's mind about brandishing texts hither and thither....

Before, therefore, a quotation of a text be of any avail a number of rather relevant matters remain to be settled, without which settlement the quoting of texts becomes a mere beating of air, a mere puffing of wind.

6.

When the finger is pricked the prick is felt at the finger, but it is not the mere finger; the whole man is pricked along with it. Whether the bather be plunged into the sea, or whether a mere spraylet dart into his face, it is the whole man that feels the one as well as the other. Now, as to its contents and meaning, the Bible is the same kind of a unit that man is in the matter

of sensation. From the hand of his Maker man finally came forth a unit. From the breath of the Spirit the Bible finally came forth likewise a unit. The ocean is only an assemblage of drops; but every drop is itself a miniature ocean, Character is only the aggregate of the man's deeds; but every deed shows in itself the man's character. Even so, the Bible as a whole presents only the truth contained in every one of its parts, yet its every part contains in itself the whole Bible. God's truth has no corners, no ends. It may be a circle with only one centre, it may be an ellipse with two foci. And as such it will indeed ever have opposites (not contradictions): the right will be opposed to the left, the top will be opposed to the bottom. But as all the radii to the circumference proceed from the one centre; so all the points on the circumference look toward the same centre. This is the unity (with due opposition) of all truth, of all God's truth, this is the unity of the Bible. And as no prophecy of Scripture is of its own interpretation (2 Peter 1: 20), so can no text of the Bible be quoted properly for its own sake, by itself, apart from the rest of Scripture. It must stand for the whole Bible, or it stands for-nothing. This is the Second Great Preliminary with which every reader of the Book must become acquainted.

Chapter 6

More On Quoting Scripture

1.

But even when we have got as far as to quote intelligently and skilfully, as becometh a man of God, a text like "*My sheep hear My voice*" and "*No one shall snatch them out of My hand,*" is still to be proceeded with very softly, when one remembers that it is with the words of the Lord Himself that we have to do. For of all the deep words in God's Book, those of the Blessed One Himself are the profoundest, and are not to be exhausted by a mere dictionary recitation thereof; are seldom even understood by such mere recitation thereof. The one who hath said: "Who would save his life shall lose it; Let the dead bury their dead; From him that hath not shall be taken even what he hath; Let him sell his cloak and buy a sword; Who liveth and believeth on Me shall never die; Who believeth unto Me the works that I do shall he do also, and greater than these shall he do; If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever ye will, and it shall be done to you; ALL things are possible to him that believeth" He that spake thus is not One whose similar words about the so-called Eternal Security of the Believer can be snatched with a grab, to be followed with a running off therewith triumphly, as if wisdom were to die with such. No, the quotation of Bible texts is no such a simple matter.

2.

When reading John 3: 36 that "Who believeth unto the Son hath eternal life," what can Christian do here but accept this as God's Word unto him that inasmuch as he does believe unto the Son he has eternal life? And were this even the sole Scripture thereon, he could rest his whole eternal future on this one testimony of the Spirit. And when told in like manner in Acts 16:37, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved," what can Christian do but accept this as God's second Word unto him that inasmuch as he believes on the Lord Jesus he is saved?

3.

Now if even one lone testimony of Holy Writ must be strictly heeded, two make it imperative; and a third makes it conclusive. One is needful, two are enough, three are ample. But not only are there three such Scriptures, there are a dozen, a score, yea, many more such. So far so good then. With these say twenty or more Scriptures Christian can henceforth meet all comers as to Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved; there is no getting away from these: THIS matter is surely settled.

And were these the only passages in the Word that have to do with the conditions unto Life, the matter would indeed be settled, fixed.

4.

But alas! the matter is not yet quite so surely settled, not quite so unalterably fixed; seeing that we are not dealing here with the words of man, but with the Book of God. And this Book of God is made up of many pages other than Believe and thou shalt be saved. For the same Lord who hath said, The Son of Man must be lifted up in order that every one that believeth in Him have life. hath also said in John 6: 53: Amen, Amen, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves. And with this Scripture before him, the Word of Him which shall judge man at the last day (John 12: 48), Christian is no longer free to rest his salvation solely on the texts, even the twenty or more of them, that say Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved. By all means believe; for, without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing to God. By all means believe; for, except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins (John 8: 24). By all means believe; for only who believeth unto the Son hath eternal life (John 3: 36). Faith ever remains the first *condition* unto life; but the condition for life is not yet life itself. There is indeed no transmission of electric power without the wire, but the wire is not yet the power. Faith is only the wire, the needful and indispensable wire, but only the wire along which the life from above is imparted unto and runs on in the soul. So that even if faith were the sole condition unto life, nothing to the purpose is yet said when quoting Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved, beyond bringing the bare wire into view. But John 6:53 adds another condition: Believe indeed; but, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves:

for the simple reason that, The words I speak unto you are spirit and are life (John 6: 63). Now whatever the depths of this hard saying of the Lord, however much they may include the faith as to His body given for men on the Cross and His blood shed thereon, eating His flesh and drinking His blood goes far beyond mere faith. There is now added by the Lord Himself the second condition unto life, which maugre its depth otherwise, is plain enough in this: That the words of the Christ, which are in themselves already Spirit and Life, are to be fed on, lived by and lived out, are to be learned, and learned in order to be obeyed. Feed on His Word, eat the bread of Life. Walk in His love, partake of His Life and drink of His cup.... Not therefore merely trust unto salvation, but also trust and - obey unto salvation.

5.

Lest, however, there be any question as to definite acts of obedience as over against honest but empty intent, the same Lord who in John 6:53 lays down a second condition of salvation, says also in Mark 16:16 that there is a third: a definite first act of obedience before the disciple: Who believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Faith is good: Believe and thou shalt be saved. Going on and cleaving unto the Lord is good: Eat His flesh and drink His blood. Learn of Him, and have life: But Who believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Show thy living faith by the loving act of obedience at the very first, and thou shalt be saved.

6.

Mark 16:16 is thus a third condition as to salvation from the Lord of Life Himself, as John 6:53 is a second. And until theologians, theorists, and void makers in general of God's word are ready to expunge John 6: 53 and Mark 16: 16 from the sacred pages, until they are ready to take here final issue with the Saviour about the conditions of salvation, with the Lord of Life about the conditions unto Life, with the One who hath said: Heaven and earth shall pass away, My words shall not pass away, the quotation of the many texts as to mere faith being sufficient for salvation must forthwith be supplemented with John 6: 53 and Mark 16: 16, if one is to be free from the guilt of withholding the whole counsel of God, of suppressing part of His revealed will, of wresting the Word of God.

7.

The writer is indeed aware that at this point of baptism being required for salvation much making of wry face will be indulged in by one set of well-meaning folk, and not a little of raising of hands in horror by another set of equally well-meaning folk. But wry face or smooth face; horror lifted or complacent hands akimbo, the Word of the Lord abideth for aye: Who hath believed and is baptized shall be saved. The writer will indeed be told of the thief on the Cross. Well, friend, when thou too shalt be nailed to a cross while believing, to descend from there not into a water but into the grave, thou too shalt surely be saved without baptism; but until then, Who hath believed and is baptized shall be saved. The writer will indeed be told about babes passing away without baptism. Well, friend, if thou too art but a babe, too young to believe, thou too mayest yet be saved without baptism, but meanwhile the Word abideth, Who hath believed and is baptized shall be saved.

8.

But Mark 16: 16 is the only text where baptism is made a condition of salvation. Well, even if it were only one: When Aesop's lioness was charged with bringing forth only one cub at a time, the answer was, one, but a-lion. One text in the Book of God, and a saying of the Lord Himself..... But Mark 16: 16 is in nowise the sole text herein. It is only the Lord's more enlightening Commentary on His otherwise dark sayings to Nicodemus in John 3: 3-5: Except one be born from above he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Except one be born of Water and Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom cannot be seen except one believe: no sight without faith. But though Moses saw the promised land, it was only from afar; enter it he could not. For to enter the Kingdom one must be born of water-symbol as it is of the Word-as well as of the Spirit. Accordingly, the early church, the pure Church of God, called for centuries without further ado the baptism of God's people their regeneration: To them then the disciple was not born from above till baptized. The early Church had the Institutes neither of Calvin, nor of Chalmers, nor of Watson, nor the Systematic Theology of Hodge; but they well knew the theologies of Acts 22: 16: No new birth with sins unwashed away. Paul had already seen the Lord, had already owned Him as Lord; but not until some three days thereafter was the message sent to him: Arise and be baptized

and wash away thy sins..

The assurance then made apparently doubly sure by more than one testimony that who believeth hath eternal life, is thus after all qualified by the additional testimony in several places, that he that believeth is indeed saved, but not until his sins have been washed away in baptism.

9.

We have thus made an advance. From some dozen scriptures we have got salvation on believing; from some thrice that number we have got salvation on believing and being baptized. Here, accordingly a goodly number of the family of God rest; here they have at least a verity made doubly sure: a Gibraltar reinforced by concrete and steel.

And yet even this is not yet final. At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every matter be established in law as to God's certainties as well as to man's disputings.

10.

Thus it comes to pass that where one is needful, even faith, a second is required for a witness, even eating the flesh and drinking the blood. But only three make aught enough, hence Baptism is given for a third. But to make aught firm, foursquare, a fourth is needed, *Who endureth to the end*, he shall be saved. Believe, yes; that fits you for learning of the Lord; eating His Word, yes, that fits you for Baptism; Baptism, yes, that only fits you for the Life, for the race to be run, the enduring unto the end, that alone fits for the goal.

And what is true of Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved (which if taken by itself, apart from Who believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and Who endureth unto the end he shall be saved, is only part of the truth, becoming even a distorted truth if pressed beyond its own scope) is equally true of many another Scripture so relied on in these days of confusion through indiscrimination for many a problematic if not unholy purpose.

Chapter 7

More On Quoting Scripture

1.

And thus we once more arrive at the great preliminary requisite for handling the Word of God aright: that in quoting Scripture there be presented not only the mind of God, but the whole mind of God; not a portion of the counsel of God, but the whole Counsel of God; not a fragment of the truth, but the whole. In other words, no Bible text should be quoted as decisive in anything, unless assurance is had that it stands not for itself, but for the whole of what the Book has to say thereof. To do aught short of this in settling disputed matters in things divine is mutilating the Book, is wresting the Scriptures. The command is, *Search* the Scriptures.

2.

Now it is here where system builders, theologians and sinners of all sorts, especially of the de-nomination-creating kind, have for centuries now in this Protestant era been making havoc with the Faith, with irreparable damage to the people of God as its end. Says the second chapter of the Westminster Confession: God is infinite in being, a most pure spirit, without body, parts, or passions, immense, most absolute, most loving....; This is meant to be clear speech for what is deemed Bible obscurity as to its God, who in the Bible is only Spirit, eternal and loving, and merciful. Infinite in being, immense, most absolute - what is this verbiage translating the words of the great God but endeavouring to illumine the sun by means of a rushlight! Infinite is a grand philosophical word for endless; and an endless God is no wiser expression than an endless man, or an endless lion. An endless line can be thought of, endless space, and endless time, but not an endless person. A person's days may be endless in time, and his reach endless in extent; but the Book of God, written by His Spirit, is very careful not to use metaphysical jargon. Accordingly the Book is careful not to say that God is infinite, endless, immense, most absolute; neither that

He is a pure Spirit, whether more or most; neither does the Book speak of His immensity, another grand philosophical word for immeasurable. The length of space may not be measured; nor the extent of time; the length of the patience of our God may be unmeasured, but a person is not immeasurable. Even when immense bulk is spoken of, it is only as metaphor, not as fact. If bulk at all it is, it is measurable, be its quantity never so great. God's Book is for plain folk, not meta-physicians. Hence it speaks plainly, and not in their jargon.

3.

But the Westminster theologians were philosophers, system builders first, and expounders of the Word only afterwards. Hence they started out with a pint philosophical theory, and proceeded forthwith to squeeze the now truly immense bulk of Book into that pintlet of theirs. The theory with which they started was that a Spirit has no "parts," nor "passion," nor affection. The proof text for a spirit having no "parts" in the Old Testament, is having Deuteronomy 4: 15: "Ye saw no similitude on the day that Jehovah spoke unto you." The proof the for a spirit having no "parts" from the New Testament is "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have," Luke 24: 39. The proof-text for God having no passion, feeling, is given thus: Paul says in Acts 14: 11 We also are men of like passions with you [and not gods]; therefore God has no feeling.... He is indeed Love, merciful, compassionate, but love is no passion, no feeling; mercy is no feeling; compassionateness is no passion. He indeed is well pleased. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased." But in loving His Son, the great God has no feeling; in being well pleased with His Anointed the FATHER has no feeling. He indeed delights. "The prayer of the upright is His delight"; but delight is no feeling. The Westminster philosophers are thus having a lusty tussle not only with large portions of the Word of God, but with the whole of the dictionary itself.

4.

The Book also says that God is Spirit. This is all the great God intended here to be known of Him. But according to the Westminster philosophers the decree has also gone forth that a spirit must have no parts. Angels are spirits according to Hebrews 1: 14, but they have no "parts." When the three heavenly Beings were with Abraham they were partless themselves,

and ate without any parts. There sat before Abraham and in the hearing of Sarah three formless, partless somethings, which Abraham took as a matter of course, without any surprise. When the angel put forth his hand and took Lot in from the Sodomites it was a partless something that took in Lot with the whole of his partless self. The angel that wrestled with Jacob was a formless, partless wrestling something; and Jacob was touched by the whole of that partless something. When Gabriel appeared to Daniel and Mary and conversed with them, and was seen of them, they saw a formless, partless nondescript without any surprise. And Zacharias saw the same Gabriel standing on the right side of the altar, and knew him as an angel, though formless and partless. The angel that smote Peter on the side in prison, and walked out with him through doors and on the street contrived to do it all without having any form or parts. And all this because the Lord had said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones." Well, a rock, a fence, a stick, hath neither flesh nor bones, hence a rock, a fence, or a stick, or any inanimate thing has no "parts."

5.

So Christian's God has no "parts." The Book indeed does say that Jehovah condescended to let His back parts to be seen by Moses; but philosophy first, Book only afterwards. The face of the Lord, His eyes, ears, mouth, nostrils; the hand of the Lord, His feet, the whole form of Jehovah, in the likeness of which the Lord God made man - it is all verbiage unto them that are philosophers first and Bible expounders afterward. The Word of God abideth indeed for ever; but these dear philosophers have corrected the text to read: The Word of God may pass away, but our philosophical rigidities must in no wise pass away. Out of the high court of metaphysics supreme the decree hath gone forth that a spirit must have no parts, Bible or no Bible, Moses or no Moses, because forsooth hath not the Lord said: "A spirit hath not flesh had bones"? Flesh and bones being according to these Westminster philosophers the equivalent of parts, a spirit is henceforth debarred from having any part or parts.

6.

In the goodly fellowship of Abraham and Sarah, and Hagar, and Lot; and Jacob and Moses; and Joshua; and Manoah; and Isaiah, and Ezekiel, and Daniel, and Shadrach, and Meshac, and Abednego (and Nebuchadnezzar

withal); and Zacharias and Mary, and Peter and John, who have all been deluded, according to the Westminster Confession, by professing to have had dealing with realities and visibilities, the poor writer also is deluded with what has been the blessed hope during his whole pilgrimage that some day he will be presented by his blessed Lord to the Father Himself, and see His face. According to the Westminster philosophers, the utmost to be hoped for here is a glimpse at a vague, formless, partless aught, - a Westminster spirit, that true to the Bible hath not flesh and bones....

7.

Now the same state of mind, confused, deluded, perverted, that has performed such spiritual gymnastics and gone through these [un] intellectual gyrations is father to *Once in Grace always in Grace*. Conceived as it is in the metaphysical need of the philosophers a la Westminster confessors, it makes accordingly equally with them short work of the numerous scriptures that not only contradict it, but make it ever impossible.

Chapter 8

Making Void the Word of God

1.

Consider 2 Peter 2: 20-22; Hebrews 6:49. and 10: 26-31? "For if after having escaped the defilements of the world through a knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and are worsted, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. It has happened to them as the true proverb: A dog turning to his own vomit again, and a washed sow to wallowing in mire."

If in these words the Holy Spirit does not convey to rational folk the thought that one who has once known and lived in the grace of God can and does fall away, then there is an end to language ever being plain anywhere to any one. But when Darby, the founder of the straitest of the now many sects of Plymouth Brethren, was confronted with this Scripture, his answer was: "A sheep cannot be changed to a sow." As if the Book of God was given as a textbook on sheep lore and swineology; and this revelation that a sheep cannot be changed into a sow had been reserved from all mankind for some two thousand years, to be unfolded in these latter days through friend Darby; when all that the Spirit meant to convey here was that a saint can and oft does change into a sinner, just as a sinner is made, blessed be God, more oft into a saint. The only difference being that whereas no sinner is changed into a saint but by the grace of God, no saint is changed into a sinner except through his own heedlessness, self-confidence, pride, or disobedience. And nowhere in Holy Writ is there a promise that the great God will here do for man what He throughout His book exhorts and commands him to do for himself: to beware, to take heed, to be humble, to obey. When Peter was self-reliant in his presumption, with sin in its train, the great Advocate prayed not that he be kept from his sin, but that his faith fail not. It had been Peter's business to

pray with the Psalmist (19:13): "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins!" which here he did not do. A sovereign God saw fit to grant here faith enough to repent. To another apostle who *equally with Peter was given to the Son by the Father* (John 17: 12), who equally with Peter had been "effectually" (philosophic jargon) *called* not only unto salvation, but unto apostleship, the good Lord had not seen fit to pray that his faith fail not; with result that the God who willeth not that any perish, left Judas to his own besetting sin, covetousness, to depart therewith unto his own place. This is all that is known here; that when God's people are in their sins, the Blessed Advocate does pray for some unto deliverance, and for others He does not. It is the philosophising systematiser that turns himself here upside down; and while standing on his head vociferates that it is God's Book that is upside down....

2.

What can be plainer than Hebrews 6: 4: "For as to those who were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and became partakers of the Holy Spirit and tasted the good word of God Spirits and powers of the age to come, and fell away, it he impossible to renew them again unto repentance. Whose end is to be burned. But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, ... even if we thus speak."

If here the Holy Spirit does not mean to convey to rational but untheorizing folk the thought that men can and do fall away after having been even far advanced in the grace of God, then there is an end to language ever serving any other purpose than the manufacture of sheer verbiage. But when this passage was read to another Plymouth Brethren luminary, the explanation given was: "But the apostle himself says, But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you." In the dictionary of philosophical theorizers you, one word of three letters, means every one, two words of eight.

3.

Again: What can be plainer to a mind unperturbed by philosophizings and theorizings than Hebrews 10: 26-31: "For if WE sin wilfully after WE have received the knowledge of the truth, no more sacrifice remaineth for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. One that hath set at naught Moses' law dieth

without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted co under the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace? For we know him that said, Vengeance is mine, I will recompense. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is fearful to fall into the hands of the Living God."

And what is the comment on this by those who, though the Word speak never so plainly, have their hearts set on making it void by their traditions? Here no twisting of the words themselves will do any more, so a new set of words has been invented, a veritable jargon, by friend Scofield and his, to supplant God's Word. They have discovered that the great God is not speaking of His people here but of a hitherto unheard of race of beings, created expressly for this occasion. Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, these words and more of the like are not for Christians, but are for "false professors," the "mere sphere of Christian profession." So that the Word of God now reads: "For if false professors (or mere sphere of Christian profession), sin wilfully after such false professors (or mere sphere of Christian profession), have received the knowledge of the truth," etc. The Holy Spirit says WE, so the dictionary is flung to the winds; Webster, Worcester, Johnson, Walker, Imperial, what have we to do with these? Does "we" mean we? Not for friend Scofield, Mr. T. and his other sound Bible students. The exigencies of *Once in Grace always in Grace* DEMAND that 'we' be translated by "false professors," and "sphere of Christian profession," and the Word of God must henceforth bow to this decree of Scofield, Trumbull and those other sound Bible teachers.

4.

And so in like manner when the Lord says in Relation 3: 5: "Who overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garment, and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life," a child, not even Macaulay's ever available school boy, but an ordinary child can understand that this promise is only to those who meet the condition: the overcomers. But what makes philosophers is that they cannot become as little children; so Mr. T. and his other sound Bible teachers, whatever else they can not see in this Word of the Lord, they do see the exact opposite of what He says. He says that if one overcomes, He promises not to blot out his name. They say that the

only thing clear here is that He will not blot out the names of other than overcomers. Says the civil law: Who pays his honest obligations shall in no wise be put in jail for debt. Says friend Scofield, Mr. T. and his other sound Bible teachers, that this sentence, if it means anything, means *surely* that EVERY debtor is assured of freedom from jail. The hazard of such somersaultings even this sound Bible teacher, who indulged in them beheld, so he put on a new dictionary armour, by which "overcomer" means every believer. Accordingly even friend Scofield's Bible must now be re-written thus: He that overcometh and is baptized, shall be saved. He that overcometh on the Son hath life. Overcome on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thine house.

5.

Again: What can be plainer than John 15: 1-6? "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman; every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can ye unless ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. Who abideth in Me, and I in him he beareth much fruit. Unless one abide in Me, he is cast forth as the branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned."

Unable to nullify these words in any other way, the teachers of Mr. T.'s doctrine have here reconstructed not only the text, but also the science of botany. In botany no branch can wither, unless it had been before a living branch, and had ceased to draw life from the tree. But in this new botany a branch can be withered without ever having been a part of the stem at all. The Christian who falls away, and ceases to be a branch of the Christ they say had never been a branch at all. He was all along a "false professor," the branch never had life; it was an outside piece just stuck into the poor vine. That according to the dictionary an outside stick stuck into a vine is only a stick and not a branch, that not only no botanist, but not even an ordinary farm child would see in the stick no branch, but just a stuck-in stick, such matters do not concern Mr. T. and his other sound Bible teachers.

6.

One of these "others," however, who is a Doctor of Divinity, and a Superintendent of a "Work," is not content to rest with this new botany, but has struck out here in a path of his own. The original Greek says: If one,

any one (tis), abide not in Me, he is cast forth. The English version says If a man. So here not only the Dictionary and the Science of Botany are thrown to the scrap heap, but the Greek Testament too. To the Papist the original Greek is no authority as over against the Latin Vulgate. This Protestant doctor substitutes the English instead; and in defending Mr. T.'s doctrine he says:

Of course, there are a number of so-called "difficult passages" that seem at first sight to deny this truth. John 15: 6, "*If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*" The word particularly to be noticed is, "man" - apparently merely professing to abide in Him, pretending to be a branch, but not vitally united to Christ. Therefore, failing to be a fruitful branch, men discern the barrenness of the claim and refuse his testimony; for it is only by our works that we are justified before men, even as it is only by faith that we are justified before God. Notice, too, it is not God casting this professed branch into the "Lake of Fire," but it is the judgment of men in their rejection of a hypocrite, "men gather them and cast them into the fire."

In the same chapter our Lord says, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away," - not that such a one's name is erased from the Book of Life, or thrust out of the family of God or are to lose their sonship, no, but they are "taken away," namely, "taken home" to be with the Lord. Further in Romans 11: 21 is another much misunderstood passage, "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee," - if we look back to the 13th verse we find the Apostle says, "I speak to you Gentiles," therefore the word is not to the Church, for when one becomes a Christian he ceases to be a Gentile or a Jew. Heb. 6: 4-9 is perhaps one of the most difficult Scriptures to explain to the satisfaction of many who take the opposite view, and yet in looking at it closely we will find that one of the specifications given at those which are made concerning a child of God, and at most, it is a suppositious case, written to Hebrews concerning a Jew....

7.

Reduced to plain, every-day English, this passage makes our Lord say this: "If a mere man, and by this I of course mean, an unconverted man, merely professes to abide in Me; if such a hypocrite then, abide in Me, he fails to be a fruitful branch; and as such, other men like him, miserable hypocrites, too, that they are, discern the barrenness of his hypocrisy, and refuse his testimony. And this is what I mean when I say, they, those hypocrites cast

their fellow hypocrite into the fire, that is after all not a fire." Again, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, a hypocrite of course, He, my Father, takes home to-Himself, the High and Holy One...."

8.

Perhaps the writer owes the reader an apology for almost insulting his intelligence in reprinting even this much of this deliverance, to say nothing of the blasphemy implied here against a holy and just God.

The words *man* and *men*, upon which his exegesis of the verses is built, are not there. But even if these words were there, the notion that man must mean the natural, unspiritual man, is as baseless as its presence in the text. Its very first mention in the New Testament is by our blessed Lord Himself: Matthew 4:4. "Man shall live not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," which according to an exegesis needed for man-made theories means: Unconverted flesh, yea, the hypocrite, shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of God's mouth....

9.

The following example of muddled thinking comes from a monthly publication of a Bible Institute of which the leader gives as his opinion that "Christian workers" are better off without knowing Hebrew and Greek".

Two brethren who differed on the believer's safety in Christ were discussing the question, and one said: "A child of God is safe only so long as he stays in the lifeboat. He may jump out, and if he jumps out he is lost."

To this the other replied, "You remind me of an incident in my own life. I took my little son out with me in a boat. I realized, as he did not, the danger of his falling, or even jumping, into the water. So I sat with him all the time, and all the time I held him fast, so he could neither fall out, nor jump out of the boat." "But," said the first speaker, "he could have wriggled out of his coat and got away in spite of you."

"Oh," said the other, "you misunderstood if you supposed I was holding his coat; I was not holding his coat; I was holding him."

10.

For the ignorance of the Bible and its God, displayed in this illustrative "incident," not even ignorance of Hebrew and Greek can be pleaded. for the Bible even in English or any other tongue nowhere presents the remotest resemblance to the notion that Christian is always a child, who needs watching against committing suicide, and is ever wriggling for it; and the great God's business with Christian is just to sit still with His arm holding down poor everlasting candidate for suicide by holding not only the coat, but himself..... Christian was meant not to remain a CHILD for ever. That but to grow into a man, who will indulge in no antics, wriggling or otherwise, is still, however, in the English Bible as well as in the Hebrew and Greek....

11.

And this is precisely the great sin of this teaching. The Word of God given expressly that "the MAN of God be perfect, furnished thoroughly unto every good work," urges Christian not to remain a mere child, but to go on unto full-growth, maturity, perfection. The Lord says, My sheep shall never perish, full-grown sheep. No father expects that his children will for ever remain immature, so that they must be ever kept out of mischief by sheer force. A father trains his children for, and expects the day when they can with safety be left without danger of playing childish pranks of their own to their destruction. But this teaching says, You are now a child of God for ever, no matter what you do with God's word hereafter. And the reader of this monthly publication accordingly duly remains a child all his days, meditating "jumping out" now and then, and only restrained by feeling that not only is his coat held from jump-out, but his entire childish self..... To reduce the great God of Christian, the Heavenly Father, to a level below an ordinary wise earthly father is the folly of Mr. T.'s teaching. And this "magazine" contains every month much of the like in its hundred and odd pages, each number having more words than the entire New Testament. The Lord's test of teachers is, By their fruits ye shall know them.

12.

Again, what can be plainer than that of the four classes among whom the sower sows the Word, only one bears abiding fruit and is saved, and the

other three perish (Matthew 13: 18-23; Mark 4:14-20; Luke 8:11-15). Accordingly Mr T. and his other sound Bible teachers label the hearers of the two middle classes as "false believers," "false professors"; mere occupants of the "sphere of Christian profession." The second class receives indeed the Word *with joy*; but they are false professors. The third class has even greater depth of soil than the second, and *hath* "root in himself," so that of *growth*, of LIFE there is indeed abundance, only it bears no fruit; but these also are false professors, dwellers in the mere sphere of Christian profession; *such never did believe at all*. But the LORD, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, the judge of the quick and the dead, before whom every idle word shall be given account of, He who is the TRUTH, *He says* in Luke 8: 13: "And they (sown) upon the rock are *such* as BELIEVE for a season." The Lord says that they had believed for a season; these teachers say, they never did believe.

13.

Again in Acts 8:9-24 it is witnessed that Simon the Sorcerer was in a bad way indeed: "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this Word..... Repent of this thine evil." Here surely is a case of a "false professor," an occupant of the "mere sphere of Christian profession." But the Holy Spirit witnesses through Luke in verse 13 that Simon (1) BELIEVED, he was a believer, not a "false believer;" (2) was baptised, baptised by Philip of the first century, who apparently did not know as the about "false believers" as they of the twentieth; and (3) clave unto Philip, held fast to him, who had not insight enough to shake off this false believer, false professor, occupant of the mere sphere of Christian profession. If Philip had only Scofield's Bible to instruct him, or training institute to get his eyes sharpened.. If Luke had only waited for those other sound Bible teachers, instead of the Holy Spirit, he would have expunged that terrible word: Simon BELIEVED.

14.

And once more, what can be plainer than Paul's cry to the Galatians (5:4) "Ye have been annulled from Christ, ye who are justifying yourselves by law, ye have fallen away from the grace." Annulled from Christ! Ye were everything in Him before; ye are now making yourselves nothing. Is he addressing here "false professors," occupants of the mere "sphere of Christian profession?" If so, poor Paul's insight was indeed deluded

blindness; for he is telling these false professors, who never had been in Christ at all, but deceiving hypocrites, that they had begun in Spirit (3:3); they received the Spirit by hearing of faith (3:2). He pleads with these fallen from grace, as "My little [dear] children (4: 19); "Ye *are all* sons of God (3:26); because *ye are sons* (4:6). His little children, all sons of God, had received the Spirit, Paul weeps over them; he is heart-broken, over what? That he had all this time been so stupid as not to know that these Galatians had been hypocrites all along? This sort of psychology is possible in Philadelphia; but guileless Christian folk who are not theorizers understand Paul's broken heart more simply; because they had fallen away from the truth they once lived in, which is exactly what he says.

15.

The usually clear-headed and lovable Bishop J. C. Ryle, comments here thus: "The tenor of the whole Epistle seems [seemingly, not really?] to show that this "falling" is not from inward grace of the Spirit, but from the doctrine of grace. The same applies to 2 Corinthians 6: 1." The bishop knew nothing here of false professors, and spheres of Christian profession. He had insight enough to see that Paul was writing to children of God; but his theory necessitates that Paul be made to say *grace* for *doctrine* of grace. The dear bishop would have felt mocked if the writer had gravely informed him, that in quoting him he is alluding not to his person, the Bishop of Liverpool, but to his title, merely; that he is quoting not his teaching, but his mere printed words.... It is thus that even brave and honest folk like Bishop Ryle victimize themselves and others by word juggling when a man made theory is to be upheld. Alford, who was an honest scholar and faced inconvenient texts bravely, says on Galatians 5: 4: "Ye were annihilated from Christ; literally, ye were cut off from Christ, and thus made void." This rendering, extorted from the honest scholar, makes indeed havoc with his own notion of *Once in Grace, always in Grace*; so he passes this verse without further notice of Mr. T's doctrine. The Authorized Version enfeebles the word "annihilated," by rendering it "made of no effect." So the Scofield Bible adds the note: "*experimental* effect. The word God says: *annihilated*; made of *no effect whatever*. Friend Scofield adds suavely: Not so, Spirit of God; you don't mean just that. Of some effect Christ is, only not of experimental effect. One who loves the Word of God would fain weep over this insult to the Holy Spirit at the hands of one who presumptuously undertakes to edit and comment on God's Book with such

unequipment. But a gracious God who worketh all things together for good unto those that love Him, has even here permitted the writer to find a hitherto undreamt of commentary, a most experimental one withal on Matthew 16: 21-23. Peter rebuking the Blessed Lord, Scofield's Bible correcting the Blessed Holy Spirit.

Chapter 9

More Making Void the Word of God

1.

In Acts 20:17-35 Paul calls together the Elders of the Church at Ephesus and tells them: "I know that after my departure grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock, and from among yourselves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after themselves. Wherefore watch, remembering that for three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. And now I commend you to the Lord and to the word of His grace, which is able to build up and give the inheritance among all the sanctified. In all things I have given you an example that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus that Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

2.

Two classes of folk are here prophesied: first, wolves, the veritable "false brethren," who have joined the people of God and their Lord for the loaves and fishes; they have only the clothing of sheep, not their nature. But brethren, not false: the wool upon them, the second class is *from among yourselves*. Real mutton in them, the sheep nature outside of them.

The wolves tear; that is all they come for; all they can do; they make no pretence of coming for aught else, of doing aught else. They do not parley with the sheep, hold no conferences with they circulate no lupine posters among them in advance, heralding their coming. They send no advance agent to prepare a platform in the sheepfold, whence to orate to the beloved sheep, or to prepare quarters for them at the hostleries, if possible at reduced rates. They just come, tear, scatter and go. Havoc was their business; havoc they carried out, havoc they leave. The sheep knew them at sight, baa-ed in fright, and neither expected mercy, nor did they get it.

3.

Not so the second class: From among your *own selves* shall men arise: your own brethren, who have been born of God together with you, disciples, believers, had come to the Lord, had been received of Him, with the assurance even that as far as He is concerned, they never need perish. "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out," was His own word to such. They had been eating His flesh and drinking His blood at His table. Well indeed had they begun in the Spirit. But they were ending in the flesh. Instead of drawing the disciples ever to their Lord, who alone is the finisher as well as the author of their faith, they were drawing the DISCIPLES *after themselves*. Hear ye of the false professor jargon. They were drawing away the *disciples* as distinct from the crowds, who followed the Lord solely for the sake of the needs of the flesh. "And seeing the crowds, He went up into the mountain; and when He had sat down His *disciples* came unto Him, and He opened His mouth and taught them." (Matthew 5: 1-2.)

4.

But note that at the hands of both these classes perish equally through the false brethren that were whilom brethren merely carnal. The wolves do not spare the flock they ravage it; slay some; leave others wounded, some unto death, some unto mayhap less desirable recovery; maimed, halt, blind. Paul's wolves do exactly what John's wolves do. This saying in Acts by the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity is simply a parallel of the saying in John by the Second Person of the Trinity. Says the Lord: "My sheep shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (John 10: 28). But the sheep are snatched away when in the hands of faithless undershepherds. When the undershepherd becomes a *hireling*, with salary stopped, when the preaching is disliked by the deacons, the choir, the women, or mayhap even the children, when the undershepherd has to be a good mixer, and a good discourses about the weather when calling any day but wash day - "who is a *hireling* and not a SHEPHERD beholdeth the wolf coming and fleeth and the wolf snatcheth them and scattereth, because he is a hireling and *careth not for the sheep*" (John 10: 12, 13). The reason the sheep perish, maugre the assurance of the Lord that they shall not is because He has committed them to His undershepherds, the

bishops, overseers, to be fed and pastured. Accordingly they are exhorted by the Lord, the Chief Shepherd, and by the Spirit, through Peter, through Paul, to watch, to be faithful, to *exercise* the oversight, to live the part of an undershepherd (1 Peter 5:1-4). But if the undershepherds, contrary to the command of the Lord, contrary to the exhortations through Peter and warnings through Paul, heedless themselves and do are not watch, becoming bishops moreover for filthy lucre's sake, or as heads of movements of their own, then the law is, If the blind lead the blind, both sheep and undershepherd fall into the pit.

5.

The Blessed Shepherd holds on to His sheep; but entrusts them to the undershepherds; and the fate of the sheep is henceforth within large limits (thank God, not wholly!) in the hands of the undershepherds. And at the hands of shepherds that *feed themselves* (if not wholly, at least first) many sheep, alas! perish but too visibly, but too certainly. Only their blood shall be required of these false shepherds on the great and terrible day of the Lord, when the Good Shepherd of the sheep shall appear to make a reckoning with those left in charge of His fold.

Drawing away after themselves. That is the special business of such: to have a "work" a "movement" of their own. A world-wide League, Alliance; a Moody Church by itself; a Moody Bible Institute by itself, though hardly a mile apart in the same city. A Moody Northfield Conference by itself; each of the three having its own separate organ though all three founded by the same servant of God. None of the three having aught to do with either of the other two. A Victorious Life Movement by itself, in America, with however coy desire to have some caudal connection with Keswick Movement in Great Britain. And the remedy against the threatened wolves from without and self-leaders from within? Says the Spirit through Paul: (1) Keep to the word of His grace, which alone is able to build up. (2) Renounce covetousness, the ceaseless cry for shekels, give, give, give, for we are here, hat in hand, to take, take, take. (3) Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, It is more blessed to give than to receive: the exact opposite of the magazine with their "drives" for more subscriptions, \$2.00 singly, but in clubs \$1.50; and conferences, where the speaker in the midst of his discourse about the Victorious Life, blandly adds: "I dislike to mention such things from the platform, but the book treating of this subject can be

had at the other end of the hall at \$2.00 a copy;" this time singly, not in clubs. Now, were Mr. T's doctrine true, all that was needful here was for the Ephesian elders to say to Paul: We appreciate your solicitation for our future welfare, Paul dear, but it is needless. The sheep can never perish anyhow, wolves or no wolves; and as to those teachers that shall arise - Keswick Movements, Victorious Life Conferences, Bible Institutes, Correspondence and Peripatetic Schools, "Drives," Leagues, Magazines, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and Books and Pamphlets - all that will be raised up by the Good Lord in due time. 'Don't worry, Paul dear.

But alas! the Spirit witnesses that not this was their language; the Ephesian elders were godly, so they WEPT over Paul's prophecies. "All seek their own," was the lament by Paul in the first century. All seek their own is still true in the twentieth..

6.

But the mind of the Spirit - how is that to be got? God's Book, like the ways of Him whose it is, is too deep to be fathomed wholly, specially by any one mind. And so the writer has duly provided himself with abundance of commentary there on; and he has gotten together, be it duly confessed, not without serious financial aches, nearly all that is worth having. There is Thomas Scott, with his six quartos, and Adam Clarke with his six, and Matthew Henry, with fifteen, all duly bound in leather; presumably of sheep and calf, rather than of swine. There are ante-Nicene fathers, green in ten volumes, and Augustine and Chrysostom, brown in thirteen. There is Lange, true to his name, in five and twenty octavos. There is Barnes in some twenty. There is Stier with ten volumes on the words of the Lord Jesus alone. There is Olshausen with six, and Alford with only four. There is Burkitt in two volumes and Smallprint Doddridge in only one. And of the less systematic commentators: Whately, Trench, Westcott, Morrison, Leighton, Horne, Tregelles, Hodge, Haldane, Chalmers and the rest - shelves of them. And indeed these dear commentators, one and all, tell the writer most learnedly, faithfully and minutely, and grammatically, and exegetically, and hermeneutically, all the things he either already knows, or need not know; and are most discreetly silent (where they are not most indiscreetly astray altogether) as to the things he does not know, the very things these tomes were so eagerly bought for and are so lovingly sought for. Still they are one and all good commentaries; but the only thing the

writer has really *learned* from them in over a quarter of a century is that there is after all only one Commentary to God's Word, and this the indispensable one, because the only effectual one; namely an obedient walk with God according to its commandments and precepts and statutes and ordinances.

7.

For to see into the Book at all, the eye is only then clear when it looks into the page blurred by the tear of penitence. The contrite heart and the broken spirit, the sigh of affliction, the groan of chastening, the smile of good-will, the joy of love, the song of victory-the godly commentators of old, the good Lord bless their memories unto His even in these days!-but what are they as commentators on God's Book compared to these? Scott is good, and Henry is good, and Clarke is good, and Doddridge, and even Lange and Alford. But repentance, and faith, and baptism, and love, and hope, and obedience, all along, are not only better, they are beyond comparison with these. They are not only best, they are the only true effectual commentaries on God's Book, not a single line of which can be at all understood without obedient temper, a faithful walk, an humbled soul, a chastened spirit.

8.

But even where the obedient will and temper are already present, even with obedience, the light of heaven is to be had only up to the point of any particular obedience, and no more. The modern notion that the manna from heaven can be bottled in jars and put in cold storage against the day of need, that salvation can be carried about as a sort of Oxo-cube of the *Once in Grace always in Grace* sort, is as sure to be disappointed as the provident manna-gatherers in the wilderness, who planned to mave salvation for for two days ahead instead of one. The manna from heaven behead aught far from odoriferous. The modern process of laying up salvation for weeks ahead, months, years, decades, apart from the God-appointed way of obedience, breeds likewise only worms, with the odoriferousness of putrefaction.

9.

We thus arrive at the third great preliminary to the right handling of the

Word of God: that a godly *understanding thereof is to be had* ONLY TO THE EXTENT OF ONE'S OBEDIENCE, and no more. Without obedience there is indeed here no understanding at all; but even with obedience it is only according to the law: "*Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it*" (Joshua 1: 3). Every place within man's reach. But *to you have I given it*, only to the extent of the foot being set upon it. The gift of the land is God's; the taking possession thereof is man's; and moreover only to the extent of man's fulfilling his part: much land to him that steps upon much, little land to him that steps upon little, none at all to him who uses his feet only as the Queen of Spain, who according to royal etiquette is deemed to have no legs at all.

10.

In 1 John 2: 12-14 the Spirit through John addresses the disciples thus: "I write to you, little children, because we know the Father. I wrote to you fathers, because ye know Him who is from the beginning. I wrote to you of God because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you are ye have overcome the evil one." Here are the three classes into which discipleship has ever been divided throughout the Christian age. That there are babes who are yet carnal, who are not yet even little children, we know from Paul in 1 Corinthians 3: 1-3 and Hebrews 5: 12, 13. These are here not noticed at all. John is dealing with those who are beyond even the milk and pap. Little children are in the kindergarten yet; have got no farther than having their sins forgiven, and this is all they are like to know of Holy Writ as long as they stay children: that their sins are forgiven through the blood of the Son, and that they now can thus come to God as the Father. This is the state in which nearly all the family of God are now still. The evangelists - with the inevitable apparatus of singer, chorus, tabernacle, platform, concourse, posters, pictures (of evangelist, singer, choir, hall, and farewell banquet taken by flashlight), and last but not least, THE COLLECTION BOX - the evangelists, blessed be God, do leave, even after such antics, behind them some children. The teachers to whom they are handed over (or the conventions, conferences, and movements, they are allowed to drift into), studiously leave them the same *children* still, if in God's mercy they are not permitted to become aught worse.

But, as in Hebrews 6: 1, the exhortation is to leave the word of the beginning of the Christ and to go on unto perfection; so John here has the class beyond the children, the young men, who have gone on unto strength,

and have overcome the evil one; and those "other sound Bible teachers who assert so glibly that overcomer means every "believer," the child as well as the young man, have once more been so intently looking at the single sapling that they have overlook the whole forest. These young men, moreover, have grown strong, not by going annually to Victorious Life Conferences to get "fresh inspiration," to be duly oozed away after a few short weeks return therefrom, necessitating new attendance for more inspiration next year (fresh or stale this time); no, they grew strong by *the word of God abiding in them*, abiding in them not while flitting to and fro, but where they are To be victors they simply grow in knowledge and obedience into young men: having ceased to be children, they are transferred from the kindergarten to the *school*. And going on in the way of knowledge of the Word, and translating the knowledge into deeds of strength in due time become fathers; the young men become elders, and have thus come to know Him who is from the beginning. Now they veritably *have* eternal life, which is "to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou didst send." TO KNOW Him who is from Everlasting and His Son, not to misknow them, a la babes, children, and even young men, this is Life Eternal. As fathers, elders, they now know, understand God's ways, where afore they could only trust. They are now in the hereafter of the Lord's word unto Peter: What I do thou knowest not now, but shalt understand hereafter (John 13: 7). As young men they had been obeying in faith; as fathers they now walk in knowledge; they are established, perfected, strengthened.

11.

Thus it comes to pass that in quoting Scripture the third Preliminary to be settled is: Who is it that quotes it? the child, the young man or the father? The sword of the Spirit handled by the mere child can only wound, if not slash and tear. Now Mr. T. and his like will kindly bear with the writer if he finds himself sorrowfully obliged to say that neither his intellectual antics in the Times, and his spiritual antics in his Victorious Life Movement, nor the acrobatics, neither intellectual nor spiritual, of friend Scofield in or out of his notes, nor the wisdom of those other Sound Bible Students as displayed in Chapter I., have so far proved to be performances of other than mere children. Would to God they do not prove in the end the mere droolings of babes, if not indeed the frothings of aught far worse than babes: even studied, persistent perversion of the Faith....

Chapter 10

Pertinent Scripture Quotation

1.

Any teaching which for its own safety ignores other teaching of scripture, or sets up one text or set of texts to nullify another set of texts stands by this very method self-condemned. Mr. T's doctrine does just this. With the few texts that can be quite effectually appealed to in its favour it ignores the rest of the Bible altogether, and nullifies a set of texts far more numerous than its own set. Only that can be sound teaching which takes into account all that the Book has to say on any given matter. If even ninety and nine texts could be cited in favour of a doctrine, and yet there remained one that antagonizes it, ignoring that one is disloyalty to Him who is the Truth; and to set up the ninety and nine to nullify it is treason; for He who is truth incarnate hath said, *The Scripture cannot be broken* (John 10: 35): not the Scriptures, but the Scripture, not a single one. Just as, Who offendeth in one point of the law is guilty of all, so to break one Scripture is to break all.

2.

Scripture being God's book it is not writ as if for mere schoolboys, not even for Macaulay's schoolboy. Accordingly in its profundity it oft presents what appears at first as antagonisms, contradictions between its diverse portions. Where this is the case, ignoring one portion to the advantage of such wresting of Scripture is only a half-brother to making it void altogether.

But as contradiction in Scripture is for Christian not even to be thought of, the true solution is to bet got in only two ways: First, by patiently and humbly waiting for the *facts* which in due time though not perhaps for centuries), are sure to appear that dispel the "contradiction," as has hitherto

been the case through all these Christian centuries unto every devout and honest heart. And second by bringing to bear on such "contradictions" the established character of God whose Book is thus being investigated, with which every statement therein *must* harmonize.

3.

Thus we are told in Romans 3: 28 that A man is justified by *faith*, APART FROM WORKS. In Galatians 2: 16: We believed on Jesus Christ that we might be *justified by faith in Christ*, AND NOT BY WORKS OF LAW; *because BY WORKS OF LAW shall no flesh be justified*. In Galatians 3:8, God justifieth the nations *by faith*. In 3:24, The law is become our tutor unto Christ that we be justified *by faith*. In 3:26, Ye are all sons of God *through faith in Christ*. These scriptures unquestionably establish the great New Testament FACT that men are saved by the method of faith, rather than of works. And here the case could rest till the end of the age, If this were the whole of Scripture.

4.

But one part of Scripture is also James 2:17-26. Here the Holy Spirit through James affirms apparently the exact opposite of what he has as strenuously affirmed through Paul. Says James: A man is justified BY WORKS, *and not by faith alone*, (verse 24). Was not Abraham justified by works? (verse 21). Luther, who faced an issue unflinchingly, at one time bluntly declared this portion of God's word to be "straw." The modern "other sound Bible teachers," lacking Luther's intellectual clearness, or his intellectual bravery, have invented a hitherto unheard-of device. Say these: We are justified by faith before God; but by works before men, as a testimony of our faith. But Scripture knows nothing of the need of being justified before *men*. Not to establish our reputation before *men* did our Christ shed His blood, but to enable sinners to be righteous before God. Scripture speaks indeed of those who are justified before men, (Luke 16: 15), but only with rebuke from the lips of the righteous judge. No, James is not concerned in establishing Christian's righteousness *before men*. He is greatly concerned that Christian should know that while BEFORE becoming a child of God he can be reckoned righteous only by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, he is not to stop here *after* he has become a son of God. Faith apart from works is barren (James 2: 20). Faith if it have not

works is dead in itself (verse 17). By works was faith made perfect (verse 22). Faith apart from works is dead (verse 26). Faith admits him into the Kingdom of God. But whether Christian shall stay therein, or be thrust out of the Kingdom depends entirely on his walk, conduct, "works," which are elsewhere summed up in the one word, Love., so that *Who loveth not abideth in death*, (1 John 3: 14). And, though all faith I have so as to move mountains, but have not love, I am - nothing. In Romans and Galatians Paul is speaking about the entrance into the Kingdom; for this faith alone suffices, and is the only thing needful. In 1 Corinthians 13:3 he, like James, is speaking about Christian's walk; and faith no longer suffices.

5.

And as the entrance into the Kingdom of God by the way of faith in Jesus Christ enables Christian to do what he hitherto in nowise could do, namely to fulfil the law - walking in love being the fulfilment of law (Romans 8:4 and 13:10), the Holy Spirit has seen to it, that Paul himself also state the exact relation of faith and works and justification thereby : A man is not justified by works of law EXCEPT through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:16). Here Paul says exactly what James says. Justification is through works of law, (elsewhere summarized as love). But this fulfilment of the law in Christian cannot take place EXCEPT it rest on faith in [the blood of] Jesus Christ previously exercised. Faith itself is not the Life. Love is the life; faith is merely the manner of entrance into life. And this Love shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit is given only to those who have entered in the only God-appointed way, the way of faith. Love is the Life, faith is not even the food; the Word of God is the bread by which man lives (Matthew 4: 4 and John 6: 27); faith is only the God-appointed manner by which the Bread of Heaven can be obtained. Faith is the ticket to the feast, but the ticket is not yet the feast. There is thus not only no contradiction between James and Paul, there is harmony; yea, more than harmony, for each is the complement of the other.

Now what is true of faith and works is equally true of every other apparent "contradiction" in Scripture. Properly interpreted, according to the mind of the Spirit, every single text falls into line with every and all other texts of Scripture.

Chapter 11

Some Pertinent Texts

1.

Before the "eternal security of the believer" can be *honestly* settled, the following Scriptures must be equally honestly and effectually disposed of, and not merely ignored or irrelevantly dismissed; or, what is worse, made void altogether by the traditions of the older, and by the wisdom of the newer generations.

(1) James 5: 19-20, "My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him, know that who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death." This from James, the inspired writer, the head of the chief church, at Jerusalem, to whom the Lord Himself appeared separately, one of the *pillars* of the Church. He surely knew who was a *brother*, who a "mere false professor." Well, he speaks to brethren, and says that one among *them* MAY FALL FROM GRACE, AND BE IN DANGER OF THE SECOND DEATH; and the remedy here is not a reliance upon the fact that such a one cannot finally be lost, but the effort of other brethren to save him from perishing. If the Church leave such a one fallen away from grace to himself, he may die in his sins, the one who was before a brother.

(2) 1 John 5:16. "If one see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and shall give him life: to them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; not concerning this say I that he make request. This from John, the beloved disciple, another pillar, of the three mentioned as such. He too surely knew a *brother* from a "mere false professor," or occupant of the "mere sphere of Christian profession." And here this John says expressly that it is not only possible for a *brother* to sin a sin unto death, but that there is no restoration for such, because the people of God are actually forbidden to pray for his restoration. Moreover, *even the brother who commits a sin not unto death is for the time being already dead* unto God, for "he shall ask, AND SHALL GIVE HIM LIFE."

(3) Romans 14:15, 20, "Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died." "Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God." This from Paul, who was great enough in God's sight to resist to his face one of the three pillars of the Church of God. And, says he, not only can one be lost through his own sinfulness, but even through the evil in another. God's own work in the regeneration of a soul can actually be *ruined*, by the mere eating of another foolish brother; and the victim himself PERISHES, the very word used by the Lord in John 3:16, when He contrasts it with eternal life: Whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

(4) 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. "Ye are God's Temple. If any corrupts the temple of God, him shall God corrupt." As in the early church only he could teach who had been given the gift of teaching from the Spirit, and therefore was not a mere occupant of the "sphere of mere Christian profession," Paul says here two things. First, that one who had a gift from the Spirit can become a mass of putrefaction himself; rotten even before the second death. And second, that such a corrupt teacher, may corrupt into rottenness not only one single believer, but a whole church! Destruction by rottenness is more hopeless than destruction through an overthrow.

(5) 2 Timothy 2:14, "Of these things remind them, charging them in God's sight not to strive about words to no profit, to the *catastrophe* unto them that hear." This solemn charge of the aged Paul to Bishop Timothy is expressly in view of the fact that a striving about words like Once in Grace, always in Grace, has a catastrophe, a complete ruin in store for those carried away by a doctrine which makes havoc with this very Scripture, as well as with many others, and in fact with the whole Christian walk. The Synod of Dort was just this catastrophe.

(6) 1 Timothy 4:16: "Take heed to thyself and to the teaching. Continue therein; for *in doing this* THOU SHALT SAVE BOTH THYSELF AND THEM THAT HEAR THEE." Here Timothy, Paul's true child in the faith, is expressly warned that the only way even for him, Bishop Timothy, to be SAVED, to continue saved is to take heed as to what he teaches, otherwise he will ruin others with him. Hence it is that in

(7) Jude 22-23 the command is: "On some have mercy, who are in doubt; and *save*, SNATCHING THEM OUT OF THE FIRE; and on some have

mercy with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." This is parallel with 1 John 5:16. The people of God, the Church, are to endeavour to reclaim all the brethren who are perishing; but while some they may save by actual personal effort, others they must not even touch, they may be saved, if at all, only by prayer....

2.

And so, the writer might go on if not with quoting the more part of the Bible, at least with writing a commentary thereon. The doctrine that man is here only on probation, that his future for weal or woe is in his own hands, that his God-given opportunity for eternity is neither in the past, nor in the future, but *now* (Now is the time of salvation!) this doctrine is so woven into the Book, forms its veritable warp and woof, that to annul it is to annul the Book itself, its purpose, its very sense. Moses, the only son of Adam to whom the Lord Christ at all condescended to be likened as a prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22) did pray: "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin-; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book which Thou hast written. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, *him will I blot out of MY book.*" (Exodus 32: 32, 33). Moses knew nothing here of Once in Grace always in Grace; the possibility of having his name blotted out of God's Book of Life was well-known to the one with whom God spake as one speaketh with a friend. And if even Moses was here mistaken, the great Jehovah let go the one opportunity in the whole Bible for correcting the notion that a name once written in the book of life can not be blotted out.

3.

It was through this same Moses that God made a COVENANT with Israel in Deuteronomy 29:14-21; and this covenant is not only with those before him then and there, but "also with him that is not here with us this day. This covenant, not only with the Israel of that day, but with the individual of the future days, contains this threat against the one who trusts in Mr. T.'s doctrine: "Jehovah will not pardon him... and Jehovah will blot out his name from under heaven." These two Scriptures are the Spirit's commentary on Revelation 3:5, and not the dictum of one of those "other sound Bible teachers," who say that when the Lord says, "to him that overcometh I will in no wise blot his name out of the Book of Life," it

means that overcomer stands for believer, and therefore no *disciple* is ever blotted out.

4.

Lastly, it was to Peter that the keys of the kingdom of the heavens were given. Whatever he was to bind on earth was to be bound in heaven, and whatever he was to loose on earth was to be loosed in heaven. Whom He admitted into the kingdom, he was in; whom He put out, he was out. Surely Peter knew who was chosen, elect. He addressed his first epistle to these very ELECT. Writing to these same elect his second epistle (2 Peter 3:1), but now as a warning against false teachers, relations of some modern Bible editors, he exhorts them to "give diligence to make your calling AND *election sure*." These had obtained like precious faith with himself; they were not only the called, but elect; but even they have to do something for themselves, ere they can be SURE not only of their election, but even of their calling

And in such exhortation not a single one of the eight New Testament writers is lacking in nearly every one of their seven and twenty New Testament books.

Chapter 12

Who Then Are the Saved?

1.

The question as to Who is Who in God's Red Book as distinct from the Who is Who in the World's Blue Book is not so complicated as the voluminosities, verbosities, and loquacities of the Books, Conferences, Institutes, and Conventions of modern teachers would make it out to be. In the Book the matter is made quite simple, so that a child could understand it, and is settled for ever by only two texts: "If any LOVETH not the Lord, let him be anathema" (1 Corinthians 16:21-24). This not from some "Jewish," or Judaizing Legalist to the Circumcision, but from the apostle to the Gentiles to the Gentile Corinthians. A curse upon those who love not the Lord; not those already lost because shapen in iniquity and begotten in sin, the unsaved; but the saved, the disciples. "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand [to you Corinthians]. If any loveth not the Lord let him be anathema. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love with you all in Christ Jesus." The whole passage is to you, Corinthians. So if any loveth not the Lord, it is among you Corinthians, disciples, and Gentile disciples. If any disciple then loveth not the Lord, the Holy Spirit through Paul pronounces a curse upon him.

2.

But who is it that LOVETH the Lord? Is it one who says, Lord, Lord, regardless of aught else? Is it merely, who believeth unto the Son, he is it that loveth me? No, faith is indeed the necessary preceding condition; but "WHO HATH MY COMMANDMENTS, AND KEEPETH THEM, *he it is that loveth Me.*" The only folk that love the Lord, according to the Blessed One's own definition in John (not the "Jewish" gospels) 14:21; also 15:14, Ye are my friends, if ye do what I command you - are those that do His commandments.

3.

Now, the keeping of the Christ's Commandments is peculiarly the believer's own responsibility. He cannot shirk it by theorizing about Predestination and natural inability to obey. Grace is indeed needful here as in every other matter of Christian's life; but the promised grace was not promised to supersede individual responsibility. The sinner's being brought into the Kingdom is wholly God's matter. The saint's abiding faithful once he is already in the Kingdom is wholly the disciple's matter; the grace needed here also being promised only to the extent of the recipient's faithfulness as to what he already has: the law being ever: To him that hath more shall be given; *from him that hath not shall be taken away even what he hath.*

It is ignorance herein of both the Scripture and the character of God that causes Mr. T. and his other sound Bible students to greatly err with that doctrine.

4.

The six and sixty books of the Bible cover the history of man from the creation of the first Adam to the end of the reign of the Second Adam, a period of some seven thousand years. From the time of Moses' writing the first book to John's writing the last some 1,560 years passed. No fewer than 33 different folk were engaged in writing these six and sixty books. Yet throughout all these centuries, the method of the Great God with His intelligent creatures has been the same: A probation first; a fixed state afterward; *but given only after probation endured.* Of the angels, with whom the Great God took as much pains as with us worms of men, only those who were tried and were not found wanting, are now irrevocably holy. A whilom Archangel, nigh to the throne of the Most High Himself, did not abide faithful, and he is now the doomed enemy of God unto eternity. The first Adam was created perfect; was duly tested, found wanting, and was cast off. The Antediluvians were given their opportunity to abide faithful, were found wanting, and were swept off. Israel was every whit as precious to its Jehovah, as the Gentile church is to its Christ. It was given the same promises, assured of like graciousness; forty times did the great God bear with their unfaithfulness; every opportunity was given them to be faithful; they were tried and found wanting; and they were cast off. Nowhere throughout its 1,200 pages is there a single glimmer of an

assurance to an *individual* of the great God cleaving to him if he cleave not himself to God; the law for the individual ever being: Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you; This do and thou shalt live; be thou faithful unto death; hold fast what thou hast; endure unto the end. To overlook this fundamental law of God's dealings with His own, to ignore it, to make it void by Once in Grace always in Grace is to make the Book of God a tangled jungle where it is now the Garden of God.

Chapter 13

The Presupposition Behind Every Scripture

1.

In 2 Kings 20:1 and in Isaiah 38:1 the following testimony is given twice: "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death, and Isaiah the prophet, son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him: Thus hath Jehovah said: Set thine house in order, for thou art dead, and shalt not live." Not once but twice it is recorded in the book that God at the mouth of His holy prophet sent expressly to announce it that the One who spake and it was done hath said: *Thou art dead*, the decree hath gone forth. No condition, no qualification, not a hint as to otherwiseness, not a ray of hope. Not thou shalt die, as in the English version, but *thou art already dead*, even now while the prophet is speaking; the doom is pronounced, and as far as God is concerned already executed. And moreover not only art thou dead, O King, but *thou shalt not live*. This at the mouth of the God of Israel who changeth not, the Rock who repenteth not.

2.

In Jonah 3:1-4 the Spirit records thus: "And the Word of Jehovah came unto Jonah saying: Arise, go unto Nineveh, *and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee*." Now Nineveh was a city great unto God of three days journey. So Jonah arose and went into Nineveh according to the word of Jehovah. And Jonah cried and said: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed: And the men of Nineveh believed God." No language more direct and unmistakable is found in all Scripture. Hezekiah is already a dead man only waiting for his last breath; Nineveh a destroyed city after forty days. No call to repentance, no exhortation to mend their ways for either. If ever a Scripture meant exactly what its literal, grammatical, and spiritual sense on the face thereof contained, it is in these two Scriptures. If Hezekiah in the face of the message through Isaiah is after all not dead, but remains alive; if Nineveh, in the face of His preaching through Jonah is not

a ruin after forty days, but becomes instead a more prosperous city than ever, then the ordinary reader of God's Book had a right to say that there is an end to any understanding thereof.

And yet the Book from the same Spirit goes on to tell us in the most matter of fact way, without explanation or apology, that instead of being a dead man Hezekiah at once became a very much alive man; he turned unto the wall, and wept, and prayed, and lived not only through this prayer, or through that day, or week, or month, or year, but for fifteen long years thereafter. And as to Nineveh, not only became it not a ruin after forty days itself, it actually became a cause of much discomfort and disgruntling to the very prophet who was the bearer of the message of its doom.

3.

Has the Great God then for once proved untrue here to Hezekiah? Has the Unchangeable God then become changeable, fickle, trifler, with not only His own chosen messenger and prophet, to whom He revealed His secrets, but also with over half a million of the sons of men in that very city described by the Spirit Himself as *great unto God*? Is it thus that God's own Book leaves Him before the children of men, before His own children? Yes, indeed, be it frankly owned that the Book alone does leave the great God exactly thus. These two passages, without modification, qualification, explanation, or reconciliation are - THERE; no blinking, squirming, or twisting makes these two testimonies other than what they are: that the great God has here declared His decrees, and they not only came not to pass, they were belied.

4.

But this is only when the Book here is taken by itself without that mighty Preliminary thereto without which the Bible indeed becomes a frequent unintelligibility. But though apparently unknown to Mr. T. and his fellow Once in Grace always in Graceites, though apparently not even dreamt of by friend Scofield in all his "Notes" to God's Book, Hezekiah who had before him very little of our Book of God, and the Ninevites who had nothing at all thereof - *they* knew that Preliminary by heart the very moment they received God's Word. They knew that however positive and unqualified God's *assertion* here as to their doom, the condition, though

unexpressed is ever implied, IF YOU DO NOT REPENT. The Ninevites, it is added, believed God. They believed not so much the damning message expressed, as rather the saving mercy of God unto the penitent not expressed, but always implied, always understood by folk thus nearer to a knowledge of God, than Scofield, Mr. T., and their fellows of *Once in Grace always in Grace*.

5.

In Matthew 7: 7-8 there is the unconditional: Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and who seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it is being opened. And as if the great Teacher had intended to forestall friend Scofield's repudiation thereof by his dictum that the entire Gospel of Matthew is not for Christian at all, but for the "Jew" (cast off now these eighteen centuries, during which this portion of the Book of God is allowed to enjoy a goodly vacation of utter uselessness as well as inactivity), He has repeated this same promise in The Gospel for the Gentiles, in Luke 11:9-10; these two verses of four and twenty words being perhaps the only ones in all the four gospels that have so many consecutive words exactly alike in two writers thereof. This their unique distinction sufficiently attests their importance in the mind of Him who uttered them. The meaning is plain, the promise doubly made sure, and without any string thereto whatever. Just ask and Everyone! In John 16:23 the promise is equally plain, equally unconditioned: Amen, Amen, I say unto you; if ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in My name. Ask ANYTHING; He will give it you! Here is indeed that blank cheque (the favourite illustration of the modern promise grabbers) signed by the Father Himself, with thee O worm of a man, to fill in with whatever amount it may pop into thy silly head... Handled after the manner of Mr. T. in his favourite doctrine, this promise as to asking anything, the disciple could here with the utmost assurance of faith approach the throne of the Most High, and with the huge cheque bulging out of his presumption-swollen pocket ask the great God, the Holy and Righteous Father, to be good enough to step off that Throne for a while, and if only for a little give the disciple a taste how it feels to be the Ruler of the Universe. Is it not promised, if ye will ask the Father *anything*, (even for His resignation, anything being *anything*, not some thing) He will give it you?

On Mr. T.'s principles this request is only God-honouring "faith." And yet the writer is certain that even Mr. T. and his like is disciple enough to be shocked at *this* application of his own principle. But where does he get his right to be shocked? Not from the Scripture which tells him to ask anything, anything conceivable, there being nothing said about reasonableness or preposterousness, humility or arrogance. Anything means anything, not a something with the anythingness carefully lopped off. Nevertheless Mr. T. is rightly shocked at even the suggestion of such a petition, because here at least his heart is pure, where the head is beclouded; because here he KNOWS (whether formulated to himself as projected thought or not) that this promise at least is not quite so unconditional as it looks; that behind it there stands a huge wall of a *Presupposition*, (even though not found in the Book in so many words) that when the great God says anything here He does not include therein arrogant and impudent petitions, but only such as are in Him to grant.

And this great Presupposition stands as a like wall behind the promise that all things are possible to him that believeth. All? yes all, but not quite, if you please. Only all that a Holy, Righteous, and Wise God can afford to grant. And so with every other promise of God, specially those staggering ones in Matthew 18:18; 21:22; Mark 11:24; John 15:7, or 1 John 3:22.

Now the doctrine *Once in Grace always in Grace* is based indeed on a number of Bible texts (of which Bishop C. J. Ryle counts up even as many as forty-odd), but with utter disregard of the one great Presupposition underlying not only these forty-odd but all the promises of a faithful God as to the keeping of His own: that these are only for such as walk in accordance with His mind, in obedience to His word, with humble temper and even Godly FEAR. To ignore this Presupposition, throw it away and trust in these texts not only ceases to be God-honouring faith, it actually becomes God-dishonouring presumption.

And this is precisely the condition of even the best-intentioned portion of condition off the day known to the writer. Well were it for the people of God at this midnight hour if only *all* slumbered and slept. But led into this

darkness by mayhap well-meaning but themselves merely groping leaders, "teachers," they are not content with merely slumbering and sleeping; there is now on all sides a vigorous snoring to be heard: Once in Grace always in Grace, Eternal Security of the Believer, forsooth! Disobedient presumption, rocked into fancied security by means of bare texts is writ large in these days over the heads of God's people, is disporting itself lustily in the hearts of God's people.

8.

Knowledge of the character of the great God thus proving to be the great Preliminary to a true understanding of the promises and assurances of Holy Writ, it is to be noted at once that the true character of God is found indeed in the Bible, but is obtained not necessarily from the Bible. This green earth has now been rolling on in space for some six thousand years since Adam; and through- out all these ages men of God, mighty men of God have walked this planet, and walked moreover with God. There is Abel and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph. The character of the God they worshipped, the God they were well-pleasing to, the God they trusted, obeyed, walked with they knew it but too well, knew him but too well; far better indeed than the organizers of the multitudinous Institutes and Movements and Directorships, and World-wide tours and great Drives of the day. Yet for well nigh half of these six thousand years - 2,538, to be exact - these giants of old had no Bible at all. A century more, and there is only the Pentateuch as God's book. Some five hundred years more with now not only Moses and Aaron, but also Joshua and Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Jephthah and Samuel and David, with now a goodly half of the six thousand years spanned over, and of the Old Testament there is only a little over a third in sight, and of the whole Bible considerably less than a third.

Without any Bible at all, Abel, though dead now these nigh six thousand years, yet speaketh. Without any Bible at all, Enoch was translated that he should not see death, having had witness borne him that he had been well-pleasing to God. Without any Bible at all Noah, moved with godly fear condemned a whole world and became heir of God's righteousness. Without any Bible at all, Abraham became father of the faithful. Without any Bible at all, Moses became the only prophet of God who was counted worthy to be likened unto the coming Lord Himself. With only the five

books of Moses as his Bible, Joshua, as leader of the host of the Lord into the Promised Land, became the type of the coming great Leader, who honoured him by becoming his namesake. And thus with the rest. Of Missionary Alliance and Prayer Leagues they knew naught, but they knew their God. Of Keswick Movements and Victory Conferences they had not heard, but they had learned to know their God. They had not studied at Training Institutes or peripatetic Fundamental Conference, but they were acquainted with their God. The modern vociferous strivings and frantic activities would have been Choctaw to them, if not Babel itself - but they knew their God, with either no Bible at all, or at most only a third thereof.

Nay the very heathen himself, how can he come to the Word of God at all, unless already knowing enough of the true God that He is too holy to pass over guilt, yet too merciful not to provide His own Lamb therefor?

And until the heathen heart is opened by the Spirit Himself to *this* acquaintance with the character of God, all further declaration now from the Book is vain.

9.

Thus it comes to pass that while the indispensable knowledge of God's character may indeed be had if need be without a Bible, there is no knowledge of the Bible without a knowledge of the character of God. THIS is life eternal: to KNOW thee the only true God and whom thou didst send, Jesus Christ.

Chapter 14

More About Who Are the Saved

1.

It is reported that an Irishman and an American once disputed as to which is correct: Six and seven is eleven; or six and seven are eleven. The Irishman was sure that six and seven are eleven; the American was sure that six and seven is eleven. They appealed to a German, who told them: Six and seven bees dirteen. Now the dispute about the exact way of salvation, with the involved question therein, Once in Grace always in Grace, is precisely of the same sort as that dispute about is and are. Against the Romish assertions that six and seven now is eleven and now are eleven, the Reformers of the sixteenth century, with Protestantdom in their train ever since, have stoutly stood for the right; that six and seven neither is nor are eleven. But the Reformers have erred, and Protestantdom has been for centuries erring after them as to the copula. Instead of answering six and seven are thirteen, they put in their bees before the true number, with much confusion to the faith.

2.

There are in Scripture nine ways of salvation: (1) By faith: "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved." (2) By calling on the name of the Lord: "And it shall be that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13). (3) By baptism: "Who believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" "which also in antitype doth now save you-baptism" (1 Peter 3:21) (4) By confession: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9). (5) By works: "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone." (6) By spiritual guides, teachers: "In doing this thou shalt save thyself and them that hear thee;" "I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22). "And on some have mercy, who are in doubt; and save, snatching them out of the fire." See also James 5:20

and 1 John 5:16, already quoted before. (7) By enduring to the end: "Who endureth to the end, the same shall be saved;" "The Gospel by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast to the word which I preached to you" (1 Corinthians 15:1,2). (8) By martyrdom, suffering in the flesh: "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's shall save it" (Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24); "Who hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased unto sins" (1 Peter 4:1); "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:4). In accordance with this the early church, the simple untheorizing church, held that only martyrs were deemed worthy to come immediately after death into the presence of their Lord; and were received at once in Paradise as a special reward. (9) The woman, moreover, is saved in addition by the child-bearing, combined with endurance on her part and her husband's: "She shall be saved through the child-bearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification, with sobriety" (1 Timothy 2:15).

3.

There are thus in Scripture not one way of salvation, of being saved, but nine ways: not therefore the one way of faith, which is deemed such an immovable fixity in Protestantdom. This much is certain, it is Scripture, it is in the word. But if these be the ways of salvation, all necessary, if not as a whole, at least in part, then it can only be asked with the disciples of old: "Who then can be saved?" thrice recorded in Matthew 19:25; Mark 10:26; Luke 18:26; and the answer is, No one can. If man is to be saved by his faith, then he can only cry with the centurion of old: "Lord, I believe (am trying hard enough, but) help mine unbelief!" If folk are to be saved by baptism, then as only he that *believeth* AND is baptised shall be saved, children who are too young to believe cannot be baptized, and their case is hopeless indeed. If salvation is by faith, baptism and works, works being summarized by love, then until the love of God shed abroad in his heart is perfected, Christian is in a very bad way indeed. Then poor Paul of the seventh chapter of Romans, and every other saint in like condition is unsaved; moreover the verdict as to works is: "After having done all things commanded you, say (still) We are unprofitable servants" (Luke 17:10). If salvation is by faith, baptism, obedience and endurance to the end, then poor Christian in all his pilgrimage never knows as to his end. Not until he is laid away stark and stiff can the disciple thus know whether it is well with him. If salvation is by faith, baptism, obedience, endurance unto the end and martyrdom, then alas! of all the disciples of the last two centuries,

only some dozen, mayhap a few hundred at most, have indeed been saved, and the rest having been permitted to live at ease and comfort instead. And as to being saved by the child-bearing, woe for the many godly virgins, and the rest of Christian unwedded womanhood. Something here is clearly at fault. Is this the Gospel, the good news for the children of men? Is this what the great Reformation and the for? the struggles that followed for decades were all for?

4.

Fortunately what is indeed impossible with men is possible with a God with whom all things are possible. The Reformers did not strive in vain. They did battle stoutly and bravely for God's truth: for the thirteen that is made by six and seven; they rightly fought six and seven being eleven. But they put in the wrong copula: they kept the bees for are, with unspeakable confusion as to the salvation in entire Protestantdom for these nigh four centuries as inevitable result.

For be it once for all understood that it is not with these nine ways of salvation, or eight, or seven, or six, or any one of them, not even the way of faith, no, not even the way of obedience, that the Gospel, the good news concerning the Son of God is primarily concerned. In giving His Blessed Son, the God of love, thus providing salvation unto perishing men, did not change His character. The Unchangeable One is ever the same. The Gospel is given unto men indeed to save them thereby, but so was the Law, which is in itself good and honourable: which if a man keep he shall live thereby. But through all the dispensations of the ages, the great God had one primary object with man: to teach him by the Law: that before God every mouth must be stopped; to teach him by the Gospel that no flesh should glory before God. That was the primary purpose of the Law; that is the primary purpose of the Gospel. Without his lesson being burnt into his very bones, man's salvation is of little avail to him.

5.

If salvation by faith, the great watchword of Protestantdom, had been the primary object of the Gospel, making all the other ways mere by-ways, playgrounds, vacation camps, the great God would not have set James to correct the misapprehension that speedily arose as it was bound to arise, as

to the meaning of the Spirit through Paul. The Gospel, the good news, is primarily concerned with the one fact taught not only through Paul, but through the entire Book from Genesis to Revelation, that salvation, if man is to get it at all, is by GRACE, not by faith, or works, or ordinance, or obedience, or martyrdom, by none of these at all, by nothing that man has any part in, be that part never so small; but entirely by grace, favour, free, undeserved favour of a merciful God, without a tittle of merit on the part of man; that eternal life is a gift, that by no manner of effort, character, status, can man CLAIM aught of God except his deserts as a fallen creature at the hands of a just God.

6.

The true watchword of the Gospel is not therefore Salvation by Faith as opposed to Salvation by works, or ordinances, or obedience; but salvation by GRACE as opposed to *merit*. It so happens that such a salvation of free unmerited grace can be attained only along the first path leading thereto: the way of faith, belief of God's Word, trust in the merit of the God-given substitute for sinful man, even the Lamb of God, Jesus. God's free grace thus becomes available only to him that starts on the right path, the God-appointed narrow way of faith; but it is not the faith that saves, it is the grace of God that saves; there is no merit in the faith; indeed this very faith, the ability to enter by this narrow way is itself God's gift, part of His very grace.

This way of faith continues in and widens with another way; and God's further grace becomes available only on the path of love (the summary of obedience, works); for, who loveth not abideth in death. But it is not the love that saves (the obedience, works) any more than the faith, it is itself part of the same heaven-given grace: the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given us. "A man can receive NOTHING except it have been given him from heaven."

7.

This grace is available, further on, moreover, only on the path of endurance, unto the end. But it is not endurance that saves any more than faith, or love, or obedience. The verdict is still: After ye have done ALL things commanded you, (keep on) say (ing) We are unprofitable servants.

And so with the rest. The nine ways of salvation in Scripture are only the nine diverse paths along which Christian must be found: now in the one, now in the other; the man here, the child there, the woman yonder, in order to be at all under the grace won gracious God, in order to have it at all rest upon him, work with him. But he is saved not by the paths, be they ever so straight, never so beautiful; he is saved solely by the grace of God.

8.

Now it is the very essence of the Gospel that while this grace of God through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, is ever suspended unchangeably, irrevocably, over these God-appointed paths severally or singly, it covers and operates only in those who are moving in those paths. And woe indeed unto the man who deludes himself with the notion that this blood-bought grace, bought by the precious blood of God's Son, is available at all time and everywhere for him who once had been on these paths: whether he strays therefrom into the broad outside altogether; or stands still, when he should be going forward, or keeps going forward and backward, or lies down faint on the way, or mayhap even falls asleep therein and nasally trumpets away to himself, *Once in Grace always in Grace*. Not for such is the grace of God bought at such terrible cost that men be enabled to journey thereunder.

9.

A farmer using the telephone for the first time was told by the servant whose master was wanted, to hold the line. He put up the receiver and held to the line, wondering all the while why nothing further was forthcoming. Now faith is taking off the receiver in order to open the way for the intercourse; obedience is putting up the receiver to our ear; enduring therein is completing the connection at the other end. But until the speaker at the other side is there, and he speaks or listens, the whole apparatus is of no avail. Faith is good, obedience is good, and endurance is good, but without the gracious God over it all at the other end it is all of no avail.

The Gospel, the good news, is thus not that there is faith, love, hope, the teaching, the martyrdom, but that it is all of grace: that man of himself is undone, that by no manner of effort of his own can he attain unto what the

great God FREELY GIVES, but only in Christ.

10.

The Reformation therefore instead of clinging to the true watchword: *Salvation by GRACE APART FROM MERIT*, (the first step into which is by faith), has shifted the emphasis from the truthful *thirteen* unto the novel falsehood of the *bees*; and it is from this *bees*, the false copula, that *Once in Grace always in Grace* has been born and nourished into a lusty, mischievous, pranky bairn; having once believed forsooth salvation is secured for ever, having once planted the foot on the first of the several paths, he has already traversed the whole; having once said *a*, the *b*, *c*, *d*, down to *z*, are a superfluity, a legality, a wicked cleaving to salvation by works as distinct from faith. And if salvation is indeed by faith alone; if ordinances, obedience, love, endurance, have naught to do therewith, then *Once in Grace always in Grace* is indeed true. But salvation is no more of faith than it is of ordinances, obedience, endurance. But being solely of grace it moves only along the PATHS of faith, obedience, ordinances, endurance, etc.

11.

Thus it comes to pass that the *Once in grace, always in grace-ite* is merely the dear, simple, well-meaning farmer, eager indeed for the yearned-for message from the other end, yet patiently and blandly sitting at the telephone, holding on, according to directions, with all his might, to the line the good farmer can indeed raise in the beholders only a smile, for ere long he will be undeceived and learn the truth. But the *Once in grace, always in grace-ite* keeps on sitting at the instrument, keeps on holding the line, but in the delusion that this is the sole God-appointed order for the instrument, for himself, and for all else. But as the curse of all delusion is that it is not content with darkness for itself but must withal put out all the light round about, friend Scofield keeps on now for a life-time holding the line, and we have the Scofield Bible with its spider-web notes, spun out from within; and friend Trumbull, with his *Sunday School Times*, two and fifty times a year, with reduced rates to clubs, and altogether too busy with his own "movement" to have time for being reminded that mere holding the line is not yet using the telephone...

Chapter 15

The Germ of Truth In the False Doctrine

1.

Is there then no truth in Mr. T.'s doctrine at all? Is it then a groundless fancy of man without any truth therein at all? Not so. Were no truth whatever therein it could not stand for a moment, as no lie can, since it had no feet, though it has wings and can fly. Mr. T.'s doctrine has some truth therein. But it is false because it is only partly true. And what power for mischief it has it owes not to its being wholly false, but to its being partly true.

Said a coloured man once at the prayer meeting: "Brethren, I've been having religion now these forty years, like Moses in the wilderness. I have had all these forty years my ups and downs, mostly downs. I have lied, I have cheated, I have stolen, I have fornicated, have adulterated; but, bless the Lord, brethren, in all these forty years I have not lost my religion."

2.

When the writer, then a babe in Christ, heard of this confession, he, like all spiritual babes, only laughed at the man's notion of religion, and duly commiserated the poor coloured man in his ignorance or even misknowledge of religion. But the matured man in Christ no longer laughs at such "religion." This coloured man knew neither theology nor philosophy, but he knew the one who never becomes known through philosophy, who seldom becomes known through theology: he knew his God. He had been permitted to know the blessed fact that though he, too, like Israel of old, had tempted his Christ some forty times, this Christ abode as faithful to him as Jehovah had been to His. That a gracious God does not at once visit the sins of His people, that He does not forthwith cast off, that longsuffering He is and patient even forty times, yea for even thrice forty years if need be, as with them before the Flood, is the one blessed truth that underlies Mr. T.'s doctrine; and this the coloured brother

was permitted to have demonstrated to him through all his days. But had he for once cast away his child-likeness, the indispensable condition for entrance into the Kingdom of the heavens, and become a philosopher, or a theologian, and got into his blood the notion that Once in grace, always in grace, that maugre his longitudinal catalogue of sins, he, the elect from the foundation of the world, never would, never could, be cast off - the very Holy Spirit, in whose comfort he could triumphantly exclaim, "But, bless the Lord, I have not lost my religion!" because of the honest groanings during these forty years of his honest heart over the weaknesses of his flesh - this very Holy Spirit would have left him with brief notice indeed: first grieved because of the carelessness and neglect, and then indignant at the presumption of making the grace of God minister to sin. Not for such are the strivings and pleadings of the Holy Spirit.

3.

Not at once did the glory depart from Israel in Ezekiel's day; but slowly, reluctantly. Longsuffering is Jehovah with His sinful people. So His glory hovers indeed over the sanctuary; but it departs: it hovers over the Temple, but it departs; it lingers over the city, but it departs; it pauses over the mountains, but it departs; one more halt over the land, but it departs, and this time for centuries, with casting off and destruction meanwhile. Very dear was Israel unto Jehovah, yea precious in His sight. Israel was engraved on the palm of His hands, Israel had been beloved unto her Jehovah as a bride; but the Great God, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, was indeed a loving, but also a stern ruling *Father* to Israel; He was in no wise Israel's doting, indiscriminating grandfather.

4.

Moreover, there are surely cases where to human eyes the Great God does indeed hold on to some of His, maugre their doings however wild (as that coloured man just spoken of) If there are such also in His eyes, then He surely deals with them thus for reasons and purposes He knows best. But that He thus deals with every one of His - against this cries out not only all experience, but the Word itself from nearly every page thereof. Satan was once a son of God, as all holy angels now are; yea, an exalted one among them. But a holy and just though loving God cast off even the whilom covering angel for his pride. Adam was a son of God: with sin as yet not

even in him; but the same holy and just though loving God cast off for his one deed of disobedience not only his whilom son himself, but his whole race through some six thousands of years. Israel was a son of God, named moreover His first-born. But the same holy and just and loving God casts off Israel for his stubbornness. And the same holy and righteous though loving God casts off Christian for the same causes: pride, disobedience, stubbornness, and his peculiar sin presumption. Nay, Christian may perish the more readily and deservedly because he has all the preceding examples before him; and has moreover been expressly threatened therewith in Romans 11:19-22; "Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell off, severity; but toward thee God's goodness, *if thou continue in goodness*; OTHERWISE THOU ALSO SHALT BE CUT OFF."

Chapter 16

True Christian Assurance

1.

Is there then no assurance for Christian in this life at all as to his final status? Is the death-bed for ever to remain his only hope as to knowing clearly whether it is well with him or ill in the great Beyond? Is this indeed the best that the GOSPEL, God's good news unto men, has to offer him? Must he spend indeed all his days in fear and trembling lest after all his strivings and runnings he too may have missed the mark? Is the disciple only to know that he is safe Now, while his conscience is with him, and the Book not against him, without any real certainty that it is equally well with him for the morrow, the week, the month, the year, the rest of his earthly days, yea for eternity?

Blessed be God, there is such an assurance; but not in the man-made way of bottling up salvation in advance in jars or holding it in cold storage for future recourse thereto; but in God's way, God's time; the way described in the Book, the time appointed from the beginning. The law here being as in all else, First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. The harvest is not assured until there is **RIPE GRAIN** to be harvested.

2.

Who puts the armour on is not to use the same speech as he who puts it off. The recruit about to go into his first battle, with death hurled all about him, must enter it with a temper far other than that of the battle-scarred veteran returning with his victorious command to his admiring land. Once more then there is the Christian child, there is the Christian young man, there is the Christian father of 1 John. The child is yet to battle with the evil one; and he is not only to battle with, he is to overcome his great enemy. Has he not overcome? Then it is certainly ill with him. Has he overcome? Then it is indeed well with him, but only to the extent that he is no longer a child,

but is now a young man, is strong.

But the young man, no longer a child, and even strong, he is yet to know the Father, and thus become a father himself; the youth becomes an elder, and it is he, no longer the youth, but the father, the elder, that may have assurance, boldness. The ordinary child, putting on father's hat and boots, and brandishing about father's cane, justly makes one smile. Christian child, strutting about in a father's stove-pipe, brandishing about a father's stick - can only make the godly soul mourn.

3.

There are three different Pauls depicted by the Holy Spirit in three epistles given through Paul. There is the Paul of Romans 7:15, 18, 19, 21-25: "What I work I know not; for not what I would, that I practise, but what I hate that I do." "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good; for to will is present with me; but to work the good-no. For the good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practise." "To me who would do good, to me evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity in the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" "So then I myself with the mind indeed serve God's law, but with the flesh sin's law."

This is the first Paul: with his feeling far from joyful assurance; all he feels is his wretchedness, though with his eye on the blessed Saviour. "Thanks to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." He has hope, but not yet certainty of deliverance. Accordingly, he is struggling, he runs, he fights: "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage; lest by any means after that I have preached to others, *I myself should be disapproved*" (1 Corinthians 9:27).

4.

But there is the second Paul: no longer the one who feels his wretchedness. He is not indeed yet perfected. But he is running towards a prize that is already in sight, though not yet attained: "That I may gain Christ, and be found in Him;" "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and fellowship of His sufferings, conformed to His death; if somehow I

may attain unto the out-resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already received, or am already perfected; but I follow on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which I also was apprehended by Christ." In Romans he had to look to himself; and like all inward looks into the heart of man, this also could end only in O wretched me! Here he not only looks no longer to himself, he looks not even back. "One thing I do: forgetting the things behind, and stretching forward to those before I follow on toward a mark, unto the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:10-14). In Romans the child in Christ finds himself powerless, weak, with only hope in Christ for deliverance. In Philippians the young man is gaining strength; he is struggling, battling, but gaining ground - the prize is already in sight; but alas! not yet attained.

5.

But there is the third Paul, not the child of Romans, nor the young man of Philippians, but the old man, Paul the aged, the father of 2 Timothy (in which he addresses Timothy as "my true child in faith"). The third Paul, the elder, no longer groans as in Romans; he no longer even strives and runs unto the goal as in Philippians. No, the Paul of 2 Timothy has arrived. Now he knows aught, he has an ASSURANCE that neither angel in heaven nor demon in hell can rob him of: "The good fight I have fought, the course I have finished, the faith I have kept. Henceforth is laid up for me the crown of the righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give unto me at that day" (4:7, 8).

The mere sowing of the field does not yet assure the crop; the mere planting of the tree does not yet assure the fruit; the mere birth of the child does not yet assure the growing into the mature man. There is life in the field, but it is not the life that is its purpose but the crop; there is life in the tree, but it is not the life that is its purpose but the fruit. There is life in the child, but sickly life, maimed life, idiotic life, is not the plan for it, but maturing unto the full-grown man. And neither is becoming alive unto God the final end of Christian. He may be barren like the field, he may be fruitless like the tree, he may be blind and maimed, and halt, and paralytic like the wrecks in the flesh; and of such a one the verdict alas is - He bringeth not forth fruit unto perfection, and thus misses coming into the only one of the four classes in the parable that is saved. No, Once in Grace is NOT always in Grace.

Other works by Ivan Panin

The English Translation of the Greek Numeric New Testament

The Greek Numeric New Testament

Inspiration of the Scriptures Scientifically Demonstrated

Inspiration of the Hebrew Scriptures Scientifically Demonstrated

Verbal Inspiration of the Bible Scientifically Demonstrated

Bible Chronology

The Writings of Ivan Panin